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The LIFE OF GOETHE

By

Albert Bielschowsky, Ph.D.

Three volumes, 8vo, Illustrated

1. From Birth to the Return from Italy, 1749-1788
2. From the Italian Journey to the Wars of Liberation, 1788-1815
3. From the Congress of Vienna to the Poet's Death, 1815-1832

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Goethe on the Campagna

from a picture by Tischbein
in Städel Museum, Frankfort.

THE LIFE OF GOETHE

BY

ALBERT BIELSCHOWSKY, PH.D.

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

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THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME II

1788–1815

FROM THE ITALIAN JOURNEY TO THE WARS OF LIBERATION

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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The Life of Goethe

I

IPHIGENIE

Origin—Sources—The *Iphigenia* of Euripides—The superiority of Goethe's drama—Analysis and criticism of the plot—*Iphigenie* and *Nathan der Weise*, the two German poems of ideal humanity, written at the same time—The essential difference between the two in spirit—The versification is the same—Harmony of tones in *Iphigenie*—What the drama gained by the change from prose to verse—Italian influences—Reception by contemporaries—Goethe's feeling toward the play in later years.

ALONG with *Die Geschwister*, *Der Falke*,[1] *Proserpina*, *Elpenor*,[2] and *Tasso*, *Iphigenie* belongs to the dramas of longing[3] which Goethe, in the years 1776–1786, partly outlined and partly finished. The longing for something really or apparently lost, for something difficult or impossible to achieve, runs through them, now in softer, now in louder accords. There can be no doubt that at first the desire for the love, later for the possession, of Charlotte von Stein, determined the fundamental tone of the dramas, which was further strengthened for *Elpenor*, *Iphigenie*, and *Tasso* by the death of his dearly beloved and only sister.

In *Iphigenie* this feeling of longing finds twofold expression: Iphigenia longs to return home from her exile, Orestes to find deliverance from the severe pangs of conscience. The Orestes motive was active in Goethe's breast before he knew Frau von Stein. Under the burden of guilt

and remorse, which his emotional and inflammable heart had heaped upon him, and weighed down by many other painful relations, he at times felt very unhappy and saw his own image in the figure of Orestes. "Perhaps the invisible lash of the Eumenides will soon again scourge me out of my fatherland," he writes in August, 1775, after he has in vain roamed about in the open air for three months, in order not to disturb Lili's peace and to find his own. Late in the autumn of the same year he characterises himself as the man,

. . . der in aller Welt
Nie findet Ruh' noch Raſt;
Dem wie zu Hauſe, ſo im Feld
Sein Herze ſchwillt zur Laſt.*

In that same year, doubtless, originated those verses in *Faust* in which the hero, unmistakably reflecting Goethe's own gloomy moods, is characterised as an aimless, restless, homeless, fugitive, God-hated, inhuman wretch, whose only purpose in life is to undermine the peace of others. In the midst of all his happiness and all his joys in Weimar the poet feels the pangs of unrest and his jaded spirit utters the prayer: "Come, sweet peace, come and in my bosom reign."

In *Die Geschwister*, composed in Goethe's first year in Weimar, Wilhelm, through whose mask Goethe speaks to us, has visions like Orestes. He fancies himself surrounded by the spirits of his deceived and forsaken sweethearts: "Why standest thou there? And thou? At this moment of all others! Pardon me! Have I not suffered for it? . . . Thou liest heavy upon me, retributive justice!"

There is, however, one place in Weimar where the Furies cease to trouble our Orestes—by the side of Frau von Stein, his "sister," as he liked at first to call her.

* . . . who the whole world o'er
Seeketh repose in vain;
At home, and yet abroad still more,
His heart doth swell with pain.

Richteteſt den wilden, irren Lauf,
Und in deinen Engelsarmen ruhte
Die zerſtörte Bruſt ſich wieder auf.*

In these verses, which belong to April, 1776, we have before us the healing scene of *Iphigenie*, the kernel of the whole drama. There can hardly be any question that from that time on Goethe's thoughts were occupied by this theme, and that its main features were slowly shaping themselves in his mind. This accounts for the fact that when he began, in the middle of February, 1779, to work out the extraordinarily fine structure of the drama, he was able to finish it with ease in six weeks, in spite of the distractions of business attendant upon an official journey through the country. It was performed immediately afterward at Court, with Goethe in his own rôle, that of Orestes, and was received with great applause. But, enthusiastic as was the applause, the poet himself was not yet satisfied with the play. In 1781 he revised it, but rejected this redaction also, and it was not until his sojourn in Italy that he finally found the fair marble which seemed worthy to enshrine his heroine.

It is a matter of common knowledge that Goethe drew his material from Euripides's drama of the same name. It will not be without profit for us briefly to recall the story of the antique poem. Iphigenia, who was to be sacrificed in Aulis by her father, Agamemnon, for the welfare of the army of the Greeks, has been saved by Diana and brought to Tauris, the land of the Scythian king Thoas. Here, her origin well known, herself surrounded by other captive Greek women, she administers the office of a priestess of Diana, and, in accordance with the laws of the land, sacrifices every Greek who is shipwrecked on the coast. Up to the time when the play begins her spirit has rebelled at this;

* . . . Thou didst
Bid my wild and wayward striving cease,
And in thine angelic, fond caresses
Found my troubled bosom blessed peace.

but, now that a dream has announced to her the death of her only brother, Orestes, she is ready to deliver without pity every foreigner to the sacrificial knife. Indeed she regrets that the gods have not brought Helen and Menelaos, the real cause of her unhappy fate, to the Taurian land, that she might slake her thirst for revenge on them. At this point Orestes and Pylades are brought to her as captives. Orestes, pursued by the Furies for the murder of his mother, who had previously killed her husband, has received a command from Apollo to bring back from Tauris the image of the god's sister, Diana, if he wishes to be delivered from the Furies. Iphigenia learns from the strangers that they come from Mycenæ, her own home, and that Orestes, after having avenged on his mother the death of his father, is roaming about in misery. From this she sees that her dream was a deception. To our surprise, instead of asking Orestes, who is able to give her such accurate information about everything, to tell her his own name and rank, she promises to save him, a stranger, on condition that he will carry a letter from her to Orestes. But his comrade must die. When Orestes declares that he cannot see his friend perish, that he will rather die himself and let Pylades go home with the letter, Iphigenia is willing to accept this arrangement. We are not told why she is willing or able to save only one of them. She returns soon with the letter, and when she tells Pylades its contents, so that he may deliver her message in case the letter should be lost, the strangers are made aware in whose presence they are standing. Intoxicated with joy, Orestes rushes toward Iphigenia. She, however, first subjects him to a long, careful examination before she embraces him as her brother. Then the three take counsel as to how they may best flee together and carry away the image of the goddess. Iphigenia is the strategist who invents the shrewd plan. She will announce to the king that the strangers are guilty of a bloody crime and have polluted the image, which she will take to the strand and purify with water from the sea. This will give them an opportunity to embark in the hidden

ship of the Greeks and make their escape. They carry out her plan. But an adverse wind casts the ship back upon the coast, and the king, who has meanwhile learned of the betrayal, would have put the fugitives to death, if Athena, as a *dea ex machina*, had not come in the nick of time and commanded him to let them go in peace, since they were only fulfilling the command of the gods.

What has Goethe made of this material? When we hold up his drama beside that of the Greek author it seems as if the result of two thousand years of moral and artistic evolution stood before us in a divine symbol. We say "moral and artistic," fully aware of the fact that the artistic superiority of Goethe's *Iphigenie* has been called into question. The objection has been raised that, compared with Euripides's play, it has too little plot and arouses too little dramatic interest. The first objection, which does not necessarily include the second, would be well taken, if one were obliged to limit the meaning of plot to tangible, visible action. But this would be a crude and superficial definition of the word. Whether or not that which springs from the souls of the characters is expressed in deeds is a matter of little consequence in a drama; the essential thing is that soul should influence soul, and that out of such influences and counter-influences there should be evolved a series of changes of situation and interest, such as compose a dramatic plot. Indeed it must be said that that is a higher form, or rather the highest form of dramatic poetry, in which the souls influence each other immediately and not through the medium of deeds. *Iphigenie* belongs to this highest form, and Schiller was justified in using the word "soul" to designate the drama's peculiar merit (letter to Goethe, January 22, 1802).

From this point of view we find in *Iphigenie* a constantly progressing, very stirring, and complicated plot, which holds uninterruptedly the spectator's or reader's interest, provided only he brings to it a receptive spirit, and not a mind prepossessed with superficial foreign standards. But, with all the depth of the impression which it makes, its real

inward greatness as a work of art escapes most people. For here, as in *Tasso*, Goethe has painted with such a subtle brush, that nothing short of prolonged, profound study can everywhere discover and duly appreciate the purposes of the artist. Let us seek to get at them through the medium of an analysis.

Contrary to his method in *Egmont*, the poet here brings the heroine before us at the opening of the first act, in a monologue revealing the fundamental features of her character and fate. For many years she has sojourned in Tauris as a priestess of Diana, but she is still as much a stranger as in the beginning. A boundless longing for home fills her breast; yet she bears her fate with profound resignation. Her hope is fixed on the goddess whom she serves. As Diana once saved her from death upon the altar, so she will save her again from exile, a second death. With fervent prayer she lays her hope at the feet of the goddess. Arkas, the king's confidant, comes to her and announces great new victories of the Scythian army, and the early arrival of his lord. No beam of joy flashes over the countenance of Iphigenia. She replies that she is prepared to receive the victors worthily and that the goddess will graciously accept Thoas's sacrifice. "Oh, that I might find the look of the worthy, highly-honoured priestess, thy look, O holy maid, brighter, more beaming!" is Arkas's reply. But now, as ever, this joy is not vouchsafed him. "Holy, worthy, highly-honoured," Arkas had called Iphigenia. Thus she, a Greek, occupies a high position in the land and in the hearts of the barbarians, to whom her royal ancestry is unknown. By what merit we soon learn. She had declared to Arkas that mourning was becoming to one unhappy. She was doing nothing. She was hovering like a shadow about her own grave; for a useless life is an early death. Arkas, full of anger, and full of veneration for the august priestess, objects to her self-accusation:

Du haſt hier nichts getan ſeit deiner Ankunft?
Wer hat des Königs trüben Sinn erheitert?
Wer hat den alten grauſamen Gebrauch,

Daß am Altar Dianens jeder Fremde
Sein Leben blutend läßt, von Jahr zu Jahr
Mit sanfter Überredung aufgehalten,
Und die Gefangnen vom gewissen Tod
Ins Vaterland so oft zurückgeschickt?
Hat nicht Diane, statt erzürnt zu sein,
Daß sie der blut'gen alten Opfer mangelt,
Dein sanft Gebet in reichem Maß erhört?
Umschwebt mit frohem Fluge nicht der Sieg
Das Heer? und eilt er nicht sogar voraus?
Und fühlt nicht jeglicher ein besser Los,
Seitdem der König, der uns weis' und tapfer
So lang' geführet, nun sich auch der Milde
In deiner Gegenwart erfreut und uns
Des schweigenden Gehorsams Pflicht erleichtert?
Das nennst du unnütz, wenn von deinem Wesen
Auf Tausende herab ein Balsam träufelt?
Wenn du dem Volke, dem ein Gott dich brachte,
Des neuen Glückes ew'ge Quelle wirst? *

Thus she who had belittled herself rises higher and higher in our estimation.

* Say'st thou, thou nought hast done since thy arrival?
Whose light dispelled the gloom about our king?
Whose soft persuasive word from year to year
Hath held in check the cruel ancient custom,
That at Diana's altar every stranger
Should leave his life in bloody sacrifice,
And oft from certain death the captives saved
To send them back to fatherland and home?
Instead of being wroth that thou no more
Dost victims immolate within her fane,
Hath not Diana heard thy gentle prayers?
Doth victory not hover round about
Our hosts, and even hasten on before?
And do we not a better fortune feel
Since he, who o'er us ruled so long, a wise
And valiant king, doth, now that thou art near,
To clemency incline, and lighter make
The duty of submission to his will?
Say'st thou thy life is useless, when thy presence
Doth balsam bring to thousands in distress?
When thou, divinely brought, unto the folk
Art an eternal source of happiness?

Although Arkas's praise may have served for the moment to deaden the pain of her condition, his second message excites it to greater acuteness. He announces to her that the king intends again to seek her hand; that she should now receive his proposal in a more friendly manner than heretofore, lest anger should ripen in his breast and bring terror upon her; for in his soul is fixed a strong desire to possess her.

The king approaches. Arkas withdraws, and soon Iphigenia hears from the mouth of the king what Arkas has prepared her to expect. Since the recent loss of his last and best son he feels doubly the emptiness of his home. For the sake of his people, too, who only under protest yield obedience to their childless ruler, he cherishes the desire to lead home a wife, and hopes that Iphigenia will now grant his wish. In vain does she seek refuge behind the plea that she, a foreign and unknown person, is not worthy of the honour. This only serves to arouse his old displeasure that she, who has met with such a kind reception at his hands, should keep her lineage a profound secret from him, and when she urges that, if he knew what a cursed head he was protecting, he would probably cast her into exile before the destined time of her happy return home, he replies that he cannot believe that a guest who has brought so many blessings is hated by the gods; but he is willing to renounce all claims if she has any hope of returning home—

Doch iſt der Weg auf ewig dir verſperrt,
Und iſt dein Stamm vertrieben oder durch
Ein ungeheures Unheil ausgelöſcht,
So biſt du mein durch mehr als ein Geſetz.*

This is his secret hope, and so he adds, without hesitation:

Sprich offen! und du weißt, ich halte Wort. †

* But closed for aye before thee lies the way,
And, if thy race by some disastrous turn
Of fickle fate be banished or extinct,
Then thou by more than one decree art mine.

† Speak frankly, and thou know'st I keep my word.

This promise adds a new element of suspense to the situation.

Iphigenia can now no longer avoid giving an answer. She reveals her lineage and narrates the story of her ill-fated race. She begins hastily, with the horror of a pure soul, wishing to pass rapidly over terrible details, and frequently interrupts herself. As the king urges her to continue, the feeling suddenly flashes through her mind that, by a vivid description of the awful deeds of her ancestors, she may be able to ward off the impending suit, and so she goes more into detail, and with impassioned eloquence unrolls before the eyes of the terrified king a picture of the fearful crimes of her fathers. Much as he may have shuddered at the thought of her ancestors, she, the last scion of the wild race, now stands before him in such noble and pure splendour that he again asks her to become his wife. She persists in her refusal, declaring that she belongs to the goddess and her parents. The king, bound by his word, desists from further urging, but great bitterness hardens his heart, and he renews the edict that aliens be sacrificed, knowing well that this will fall heaviest upon Iphigenia. Two strangers who have been found on the strand are to be the first new victims of the ancient custom. Thus Iphigenia's horizon has suddenly become overcast. The slight hope which we, with the heroine, attached to her pious prayer at the beginning of the drama, is trodden under foot. There is as little prospect as ever of her return home, and her life here is made painful by this horrible burden. Instead of being rescued, she is threatened with a hard and dangerous struggle. Her whole moral nature revolts at the thought of compliance with the king's command. But will the king revoke his cruel edict?

According to certain critics, the reader, or hearer, foresees that the great and noble soul of the king will yield, and hence the poet, by giving Thoas such a character, has from the very beginning destroyed the drama's interest. It is possible for a critic to write thus who knows the subsequent development, and is no longer able to distinguish

his absolute knowledge from the relative knowledge which the reader has at this point. As a matter of fact, the reader is as yet anything but certain of the king's resolutions. True, he has heard him spoken of as a "noble man," and his "great soul" has been referred to; but these were words which, under the impression of the other things heard of him, lacked convincing power. The only title to fame which might have been reckoned in his favour, the abolition of bloody sacrifices, rests on a weak foundation. It did not spring from a spontaneous feeling of noble humanity, and has not been made permanent by a single final decree; Iphigenia has been obliged from year to year to summon all her powers of persuasion to obtain from the reluctant tyrant a renewal of the edict. Such being the case, why should he not, now that Iphigenia's eloquence has lost its power, restore the ancient bloody sacrifices, and compel the priestess to perform them? For he believed that in doing so he was fulfilling a religious duty and satisfying the demands of his people. Everything else speaks in favour of our expecting him to follow such a course. He is harsh by nature, so that his rule weighs heavily upon his subjects. He is extremely sensitive and, when irritated, forgets himself, becomes violent, bitter, scornful, even toward a weak woman, a sacred priestess. When Iphigenia rejects his suit and begs him to send her home, he overwhelms her with stinging accusations. He calls her a frivolous woman, who aimlessly takes up first with this whim, then with that, faithless as those who allow themselves to be enticed away from the arms of father or husband by an amorous seducer. And should we not expect this man, who addresses such language to a most self-restrained and chaste maiden, merely because she refuses to grant his desire, and gives expression to her own proper desire,—should we not expect him ruthlessly to break down the resistance of the priestess? Does not faithful Arkas also fear that the king's anger will bring terror to Iphigenia? Might he not satisfy his conscience with the excuse that his harshness was in obedience to the

commands of religion? Furthermore, the order has been promulgated, and a sovereign is loth to countermand his orders, especially such a sovereign as Thoas, to whom is ascribed a firm, relentless will, which brooks no restraint in the execution of its determinations. In addition to all this, his spirit has been filled with gloom since the death of his last son, and, if he should not find in Iphigenia a new spouse, he feels that he is threatened with a lonely and helpless old age, and, even worse, with rebellion and assassination.

Hence, instead of saying that Goethe has destroyed the interest, we should rather admire the subtlety with which he has assured it, bringing out in bold relief in the first act the dark sides and tragic elements in Thoas's character and situation, while he lets their brighter phases shimmer through the narrow rents of the black overhanging cloud.

The opening of the second act brings the two foreign captives, Orestes and Pylades, upon the scene: Orestes, the self-torturing pessimist, who sees the black side of everything; Pylades, always sanguine and hopeful. While Orestes's mind is occupied with approaching death, which is to bring him peace in a way he has not anticipated, Pylades is busy evolving plans of escape. He dismisses his friend because be wishes first to probe Iphigenia in a sly roundabout way, and the presence of straightforward, impatient Orestes does not seem to him conducive to the success of his undertaking.

Iphigenia steps out of the temple, takes off Pylades's chains, and addresses him in Greek. Delighted at hearing his mother-tongue, he asks her about her ancestry; but she, as a priestess, refuses to answer, and addresses the same question to him. Pylades tells her that he and his companion are brothers, and were born in Crete. Because of a fratricide his brother is pursued by the Furies, but Apollo has promised him deliverance in the temple of his sister in Tauris; hence their presence here. He begs and implores her to have mercy on his brother. At first Iphigenia passes by the request without giving it any attention.

Pylades has said, in telling his story, that his father was at the siege of Troy. This remark engages Iphigenia's entire attention, and, with an emotion she can hardly repress, she inquires about the fate of Troy and the heroes who besieged the city. When she hears of her father's terrible death, she hides her face, deeply agitated, and withdraws into the temple.

At the beginning of the third act she comes out again, and, this time, meets Orestes. Why him, and him alone, we are not definitely informed. It is highly probable that Pylades has sent him, that he, the one really deserving of pity, may appeal to the heart of the priestess. In any case it is a stroke of genius on the part of Goethe to bring about a separate meeting between Iphigenia and each of the two companions, so that the character of each may be revealed with all its peculiarities. At the same time the poet satisfies the secret desire of the reader that brother and sister should be at their first meeting untrammelled by the presence of any other, but, especially, of the worldly-wise Pylades. In Euripides, on the other hand, Orestes and Pylades always appear together, like the Siamese twins, Pylades usually in the rôle of a mere supernumerary.

Iphigenia loosens Orestes's chains, but only to grant him a last relief before his death; for, as she asserts, she is not in a position to save him. Even if she should hesitate to consecrate him to death, the angry king would choose another maiden to be the priestess, and the terrible deed would still be done. Thus, from the very beginning, a deep shadow is cast over the scene, and we anxiously await further developments. Severe blows are in store for the downcast priestess. She does not yet know who has committed the avenging murder of her mother, nor who the victim is standing before her and waiting to be sacrificed. The truth in both cases she now learns from Orestes, who tears to pieces the fabric of lies woven by his friend; for he cannot bear the thought that Iphigenia's great soul should be deceived by a falsehood. "Let there be truth between us!" he says, makes himself known, and after a few pas-

sionate words hastens away. Iphigenia is struck dumb with emotion. Only when Orestes is gone does she recover her power of speech. She utters a prayer to the gods, in which she thanks them for having restored her brother to her, and then, with bated breath, adds the anxious petition:

O laßt das lang' erwartete,
Noch kaum gedachte Glück nicht, wie den Schatten
Des abgeschiedenen Freundes, eitel mir
Und dreifach schmerzlicher vorübergehn! *

Orestes soon returns to the priestess. His soul is violently agitated by the memory of the murder of his mother, and by the pangs of the Furies. He hears the fiendish laughter of the Furies, who await him outside the temple grove, and, feeling himself in their power, goes mad. He does not hear Iphigenia say that she is his sister. He fancies he sees in her a goddess of vengeance, because her voice moves his soul to its very depths, and, as she, with growing tenderness, endeavours to calm him, and her appeals to him show more and more affection, he takes her for a beautiful nymph seeking to ensnare him. When at last the word "sister" has found the way to his ear, the ancient curse appears to him in a form more terrible than ever. Now Iphigenia, his beloved sister, is forced to kill him, her beloved brother:

Weine nicht, du hast nicht schuld,
Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester.
Ja, schwinge deinen Stahl, verschone nicht,
Zerreiße diesen Busen und eröffne
Den Strömen, die hier sieden, einen Weg! †

* Let not this long awaited joy,
Of which I scarce had dreamed, pass by in vain,
As did the shade of my departed friend,
And leave behind a threefold weight of woe!

† Weep not, for thou art not to blame.
Since childhood's tender years I nought have loved
So dearly, sister, as I thee could love.

With these words he sinks down exhausted. Iphigenia hastens away in search of Pylades, for she is no longer able to bear her happiness and misery alone.

Thus, in the middle of the play, both tragedy and plot rise to the climax. Iphigenia is surrounded by calamity on all sides. On the one hand she is threatened by the wrath of the king, and by his command to immolate these strangers; on the other hand, by the madness of her brother. The tragical element in the sacrifice of the strangers, and in the madness of her brother, is terribly intensified by the fact that she has so long yearned to embrace her brother.

A great many critics[4] have found fault with the poet for not making Iphigenia, the moment that Orestes makes himself known, rush into his arms with a loud cry of joy and rapturous delight, instead of having her at first keep silent, and then direct to the gods a sustained prayer of thankfulness. Indeed the Englishman Lewes went so far as to say: "This is more like the dramatic treatment we find in juvenile writers than what is expected from a great poet." It would be hard to conceive of a more distorted judgment. A juvenile dramatist might well have been expected to depict the recognition scene as Lewes and others would have it; for that would have been the first thing to suggest itself. If Goethe rejected it, he had his own good reasons for doing so.

The character of Iphigenia is raised far above that of the average human being. She is a saint, is as one of the gods. Her feelings of joy and sorrow are deeper than those of other mortals, but her emotions do not escape her breast until they have attained a moderation befitting a divine soul. For such a soul, always mindful of the heavenly and the eternal, it is only natural that its strongest emotions should find expression in an invocation to the gods. For it is they who give and take away joy and sorrow.

Her pious, subdued reception of the extraordinary in

> Raise now thy steel, and, prithee, spare me not;
> Thrust deep into my breast, release the streams
> That seethe within, and let them freely flow.

this instance is not an isolated phenomenon. We observe the same bearing elsewhere. When Thoas commanded her to resume the bloody sacrifices, and turned away from her in bitter anger, it was for her a moment of horror. A most friendly relation, rich in blessing, was disturbed, the fruit of many years of labour destroyed, and before her lay an awful, barren future, doubly awful and barren for her, to whom an abode in Tauris, even under most favourable conditions, had hitherto seemed a hard decree of fate. Here, just as reasonably as at her recognition of Orestes, she might have been expected to pour out her soul in passionate cries. Instead, she remains as calm as the statue of a Greek goddess, and a gentle prayer of resignation is all that passes her lips. It is much the same when she receives the news of the murder of her father, and later of the murder of her mother. No cry escapes her lacerated, bleeding heart. No "Woe is me!" Only by the heaving of her bosom and by her silent flight do we recognise her agitation, in the one case, while in the other we find its expression in a painful question put to the gods. Likewise when the joyful news is imparted to her that Orestes and Electra are still alive, no loud cry of rapture escapes her; again she utters a prayer, a petition to the sun to lend her his most beautiful beams, that she may lay them before the throne of Jove as an offering of gratitude.

Iphigenia's bearing is uniformly calm, and Goethe would have given her character a conflicting trait if he had allowed her feelings to burst forth in stormy utterances in the scene of recognition. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that she was taken away from home when her brother was yet a little child. About twenty years later an utter stranger steps up to her with the declaration that he is her brother. Even if the man wins her confidence in other matters, will she fly at once into his arms with a cry of rejoicing? Will she not rather start back astonished, and direct a number of searching questions to him, in order to convince herself that the stranger really is her brother? And will not her joy flow freely from her heart only after

certainty has come to her? In our opinion there is no doubt that she will do so, and this is, moreover, the way in which the recognition scene appears in Euripides—very natural and very prosaic. Now if a woman of the type of Euripides's Iphigenia bears herself so, how does Goethe's heroine conduct herself? To be sure, she does not need as many questions as her Greek original; the honest face of her brother, her own heart tells her that Orestes has spoken the truth. But a moment does not suffice to erase the feeling of strangeness from the breast of a virgin priestess. Hence, even after a long cordial conversation, she naturally finds it difficult to suppress a "shudder which holds her aloof from the strange man." *

Viewed in this light, that which some have considered a defect in the poem appears as a proof of Goethe's psychological and artistic insight. With a happy sense of discrimination he successfully avoided the lurking dangers of sober realism, after the manner of Euripides, on the one hand, and of superficial art-tradition, of the type of sudden outbursts of joy, on the other.

Orestes has revived from his swoon, but is still surrounded by the fanciful creatures of his delirium. He believes that he has descended to the lower world and sees himself in the presence of his ancestors. He is not, however, filled with wrath and hostility, nor is he tortured by the punishments of the gods; he is free and friendly and peaceful. Vengeance and curse have vanished.

How did this beautiful dream-picture enter the soul of Orestes, tortured by the spirits of darkness? It is a wonderful after-effect of the healing touch of his holy sister, and symbolises to us the great transformation which this has wrought in his soul. Belief in the love of the gods has supplanted belief in their vengeance. Belief in their curse has given way to faith in atonement. The moment that Orestes is converted to the belief in divine mercy it can be bestowed upon him. Naturally enough his sister is

* This feature seemed to Goethe so necessary that he inserted it in the drama in 1781.

again the mediator. She has returned to him with Pylades, and prays to Diana in his behalf. After her prayer Pylades easily arouses him from his deluding visions of the lower world, and he turns immediately, healed and clear in mind, and addresses to Iphigenia the words:

Laß mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben. *

As an evidence that he has learned again to believe in divine mercy, there arises to his lips an ardent prayer of supplication, to which he adds the joyful confession:

Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz.
Die Eumeniden ziehn, ich höre sie,
Zum Tartarus und schlagen hinter sich
Die ehrnen Tore fernabdonnernd zu.
Die Erde dampft erquickenden Geruch
Und ladet mich auf ihren Flächen ein,
Nach Lebensfreud' und großer Tat zu jagen. †

Now that we have reached this important climax of the play we understand why the poet has given Iphigenia such an exalted character. Hers was the task of finding an inward solution for the problem of liberating a sinful race from the curse of sin—a problem for which the Greek myth offered an outward solution. For this purpose there was need of a perfectly pure and sinless personality, whose life had been sacrificed for the welfare of others. Symbolically this sacrifice, this death, had occurred twice in Iphigenia's life: the first time on the sacrificial altar in Aulis, the second time in her exile among the Taurians. And she had

* The first pure joy in life now let me feel
With liberated heart in thine embrace.

† The curse dissolves, I feel it in my heart.
I hear the Furies, as they haste away
To Tartarus; I hear the brazen doors
Behind them close with distant thunder-roll.
The earth refreshing odours now exhales,
Inviting me henceforth to strive to gain
True joy in life, and mighty deeds perform.

made the sacrifice without a murmur, in pure love and perfect obedience to the will of the gods. This not only made her holy herself; it also gave her power to redeem from sin others, who should allow themselves to be inwardly touched by her holiness.*

It has been said that the poet here intrenches upon the most profound mystery of the Christian Church, the mystery of vicarious sacrifice.† We can hardly say that he was conscious of doing so. He gave the basis of the cure in the simple, profound words which he wrote on the fly-leaf of a copy of *Iphigenie*, dedicated to the actor Krüger, in 1827:

Alle menſchlichen Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menſchlichkeit. ‡

Orestes is liberated from the grinding curse, and we inhale with him a breath of joy; we should also forget with him and his sister that the hardest trials are yet to come, if Pylades did not remind us of the reality of things in the few powerful words:

Verſäumt die Zeit nicht, die gemeſſen iſt!
Der Wind, der unſre Segel ſchwellt, er bringe
Erſt unſre volle Freude zum Olymp.
Kommt! Es bedarf hier ſchnellen Rat und Schluß. ||

With these words the curtain falls on the third act, and a series of scenes which have never been surpassed in dramatic power, depth of insight, and artistic finish.

The fourth act begins. The situation has become more complicated than before by the fact that one of the strangers

* In this connection attention may be called to Goethe's words in a letter to Frau von Stein (March 31, 1776): "Your soul, in which thousands should believe and be saved."

† *Cf.* Kuno Fischer, *Goethes Iphigenie*, 2nd ed., p. 47.

‡ Pure humanity redeemeth
Every frailty of mankind.

|| Our time is precious; longer tarry not,
But let the wind that swells our sails first bear
Olympusward the fulness of our joy.
Come! Counsel quick we need and firm resolve.

is Orestes. Now it is no longer merely a question of rescuing the two friends, but also of Iphigenia's flight with them, and, hardest of all, of carrying away the image of Diana. Here we come upon a weak spot in the otherwise so carefully constructed plot.

By changing the healing of Orestes to suit modern Christian ideas Goethe gave this kernel of the drama an extraordinary depth and inwardness of meaning; but he overlooked the fact that this transformation collided with the chief motive of the further solution of the difficulty, which he retained from the antique drama. We are expected to believe with the characters of the play that the healing is merely temporary, and that it can only become permanent when the image of Diana is stolen and carried to Delphi. As we cannot believe this, since we are entirely convinced of the completeness of the cure, we are somewhat displeased to see Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades still concerned about the theft of the temple image. But our displeasure is of short duration. By a kind of spiritual contagion we soon find ourselves again in full sympathy with their sorrows. This is in some measure due to the fact that with the theft of the image of the goddess is inseparably bound up, not only the rescue and flight of the three, but also a moral conflict in Iphigenia's soul, which is far greater than its immediate occasion.

Between the third and fourth acts Pylades has drawn up the plan of campaign. It is the same as that in Euripides. But while in the Greek drama Iphigenia is the originator of it, and receives a reward of praise from Orestes ("Admirable is woman's cunning"), here she stands in the presence of the intrigue a shame-faced child. She must let others guide her and teach her the words which she is to say to the king, when he commands the sacrifice, for her pure soul would never have known how to frame the falsehood. She expresses in strong accents the pain it causes her to tell the lie. By means of Iphigenia's conflicting feelings Goethe has aroused an entirely new and strong interest in the descending action. Will Iphigenia carry out

the part that is assigned to her, or will she rather preserve her purity of soul, cut off her return home, and bring her brother and his friend to ruin? This is the question which now keeps us in anxious suspense.

Arkas comes and in the name of the king bids the priestess make haste with the sacrifice. Iphigenia repeats the words which she has learned by heart. Arkas bids her postpone the purification of the image until the king has been informed of it. She consents on condition that he will not delay. Arkas promises to return soon, but before he leaves her he repeats his request that she listen to the king's suit, and carefully weigh in her mind how nobly he has conducted himself toward her since the day of her arrival. These words make a profound impression on Iphigenia, but of a different nature than Arkas had intended. The memory of the king's benefactions makes the deception which she is to practice doubly hateful in her sight, and she begins to waver. Pylades finds her in this frame of mind, and, when she confesses to him frankly how hard it is for her to deceive and rob the king, he summons all his powers of eloquence to rid her of these conscientious scruples.

Apparently Pylades's arguments have convinced Iphigenia. "I must follow him, for I see my brother and his friend in pressing danger." The necessity of deceiving the king she looks upon as a continuation of the curse resting upon her race. Separated from her family, she had hoped to keep her hand and heart pure, and by her purity to bring a new blessing upon her house, if she should ever return home. Now the gods compel her, too, to defile herself.

O, daß in meinem Buſen nicht zuletzt
Ein Widerwille keime! Der Titanen,
Der alten Götter teifer Haß auf euch,
Olympier, nicht auch die zarte Bruſt
Mit Geierklauen faſſe! Rettet mich,
Und rettet euer Bild in meiner Seele!*

*Let not antipathy within my breast
At this late hour arise! The hatred deep
Of Titans, of the ancient gods for you,

This is followed by the splendid song of the Parcæ, which paints with the grandeur of a Michael Angelo the merciless, capricious gods persisting in their eternal selfish enjoyments. What significance does this song have at this moment in the mouth of Iphigenia? It is contrary to all her belief. Her idea of the gods is exactly the opposite, as we learn from more than one passage. She considers them just, gentle, kind—

Denn die Unſterblichen lieben der Menſchen
Weitverbreitete gute Geſchlechter,
Und ſie friſten das flüchtige Leben
Gerne dem Sterblichen, wollen ihm gerne
Ihres eigenen, ewigen Himmels
Mitgenießendes, fröhliches Anſchaun
Eine Weile gönnen und laſſen.*

Is it possible her faith has experienced so sudden a revulsion? Can we admit such a change in Iphigenia in view of the prayer which she has just addressed to the gods: "Rescue me, and in my soul your sacred image save"? Or can it be that this song has no significance other than that of the slow fading away from memory of the old Titan hatred, which the poet inserted in order that he might set a sparkling jewel in the gold of the drama? We are as loth to accept this explanation as the other. Goethe could not conceive the shadow of the hatred of the gods as hovering over Iphigenia's bosom so long a time as it takes to sing the song. We are rather inclined to the opinion that it has an entirely different significance. Iphigenia

Olympians, let not with vulture's claws
My tender bosom seize! Oh, rescue me,
And in my soul your sacred image save!

* For the Immortals love generations
Widely extended of virtuous people,
And for a mortal gladly prolong they
Life's fleeting measure, and ever are ready
Him to vouchsafe through serene contemplation
Here for a while a spirit-refreshing
Share in the joys of eternal Olympus.

sings the song of the gods, who walk mercilessly over the fates of men, as if she would reject with a shudder this comfortless belief which for an instant flashed through her inmost being. The tragic song affects her as the tragedy does the hearer. Consequently we very soon see her doing the opposite of what she had just determined to do. She does not lie, out of hatred of the gods, who have laid this guilt upon her; she speaks the truth, because she trusts the gods.

The stratagem of the Greeks being now noised abroad, the king sends a detachment of armed men down to the coast to capture them. He is inflamed with violent anger at Iphigenia's complicity in the treacherous act. Rescue of the Greeks by means of force or stratagem is out of the question, and Goethe could not, like Euripides, send a *deus ex machina* to their assistance. Only the highest display of moral force can now unravel the knot, and for this reason the poet was compelled to raise the character of Iphigenia to a sublime height.

When Iphigenia appears before the king in response to his summons she is still in ignorance of his measures to frustrate Pylades's stratagem. The poet has in this way secured for himself the great advantage of allowing her further actions to proceed from purely ethical motives. Between Thoas and Iphigenia there is no longer any question of the purification of the image. This matter, to judge by the situation of affairs, and Iphigenia's own thoughts, has been relegated to the background. The immediate question is that of the principle involved in bloody sacrifice. Iphigenia persists in her refusal, and when the king refers her to the ancient law of Tauris she appeals to the older law of humanity, as does Antigone in addressing Kreon. The king, unmoved, demands obedience, and, alluding to the stratagem, of which he has been informed, says by way of warning,

Die Vorſicht ſtellt der Liſt ſich klug entgegen,*

to which Iphigenia at once replies majestically,

* Precaution wisely baffles stratagem.

Und eine reine Seele braucht sie nicht.*

It is evident that in her soul she has long ago cast aside Pylades's plan. Then with fervent faith in the power of truth and morality she immediately proceeds to disclose boldly to the king the names of the strangers and their purpose to steal the temple image, in return for which Apollo has promised to rescue her brother from the Furies. "I have now laid the fate of both of us in thy hand: destroy us, if thou dare." Iphigenia's moral greatness, which reaches its most beautiful culmination in this appeal to moral principles, overwhelms the king, but he is unwilling to confess it either to himself or to her. Putting an unfavourable interpretation upon his thoughtful silence, she accuses herself of treachery to her brother and begs the king to kill her first in order that she may not need to murder her brother. Thus she unintentionally moves still more deeply the heart of the king, already stirred. And when, a moment later, the happy thought occurs to her to remind him of his promise to let her go home, if an opportunity should offer, his severity begins to moderate. He does not yet consent, neither does he any longer refuse. He would doubtless have readily agreed to abolish the bloody sacrifices; but what Iphigenia demanded was more, far more, and encroached upon his strongest interests as a man and as a king: he was asked to give up the woman he loved, to give up the new prospect of a happy family life, which would strengthen his hold on the government, to give up the venerable image of the goddess, to which the people clung in faith. He was justified in saying to her, "Thou askest much within a little space." Nevertheless we feel assured that the noble metal of the king's soul, once brought to the test, will prove capable of overcoming all the hostile elements within him, and we are already inclined to allow our aroused dramatic interest to give place to tender emotion, when the poet restores it to its former intensity by means of a serious episode.

The king's men have been meanwhile engaged in a fight

* Precaution needeth not the soul that 's pure.

with the Greeks, and Orestes, in extreme excitement, comes rushing in, with drawn sword, and, not seeing the king, calls to Iphigenia to flee with him quickly, while his forces still cover the way. A gracious prince can overlook many things, but the man who meets his orders with armed resistance is his enemy, even if he be a most worthy man and one of his nearest kin. So Thoas seizes his sword immediately, and the reconciliation for which Iphigenia has prepared the way seems destined to be submerged in blood. Then Iphigenia with imposing majesty steps between the combatants, and with consummate tact introduces the king to her brother as her second father, in whose hands she has laid the fate of all. To Orestes's question, "Will he a peaceful homeward voyage grant?" she replies with the same great tact, "Thy gleaming sword forbids me answer thee." The two men are disarmed, and, so far as the king is concerned, the way is again opened for a friendly understanding. This whole scene, so full of violent agitation and so significant, does not exceed the small compass of eighteen verses.

Meanwhile Pylades and Arkas have approached with drawn swords: Pylades, to urge a hasty flight; Arkas, to announce that the Greeks have retreated and that their ship is already in the hands of the king's forces. Here is a new temptation for the king. He is the victor and has the right, and is bound, to demand retaliation for the blood of his subjects. But in the presence of Iphigenia he preserves his conciliatory mood and orders a cessation of hostilities.

Then follows the concluding scene, in which Goethe shows great wisdom. The action rises through three successive stages, and each stage moves our souls to a higher pitch. Thoas demands of Orestes a proof of his identity. Instead of entering upon formal proofs, Orestes, in a manner befitting his character and convincing to Thoas, offers to give a proof of his valour, if only the king will match the best of his subjects against him. The king, unmistakably pleased with the youth's courage, is willing to fight the

duel himself, but is hindered by Iphigenia, who convinces him of the genuineness of her brother's claims. Then the king brings up the second difficulty in the way of a peaceful solution, the matter of the image of Diana. This the poet removes by the wonderful inspiration that the words of Apollo—

> Bringſt du die Schweſter, die an Tauris' Ufer
> Im Heiligtume wider Willen bleibt,
> Nach Griechenland, ſo löſet ſich der Fluch—*

did not refer to the sister of the god, but to the sister of Orestes.

Orestes does not wait to hear what the king will say in reply to this interpretation of the oracle, but with fiery eloquence urges him at once to set Iphigenia free. Referring to her as one favoured of the gods, he implores Thoas:

> Hindre nicht, daß ſie die Weihe
> Des väterlichen Hauſes nun vollbringe,
> Mich der entſühnten Halle wiedergebe,
> Mir auf das Haupt die alte Krone drücke!
> Vergilt den Segen, den ſie dir gebracht!
> Und laß des nähern Rechtes mich genießen!'
> Gewalt und Liſt, der Männer höchſter Ruhm,
> Wird durch die Wahrheit dieſer hohen Seele
> Beſchämt, und reines kindliches Vertrauen
> Zu einem edlen Manne wird belohnt. †

Every sentence from the mouth of the brave prince

* If back to Greece the sister thou wilt bring
From Tauris' shores, where she against her will
Within the temple lives, thy curse will end

† Hinder not that she complete
The consecration of our father's house,
And lead me back to its rehallowed halls
Upon my head the ancient crown to place.
Repay the blessing which she brought to thee!
My nearer right to her let me enjoy.
For force and wiles, the highest fame of men,
Before the truth of this exalted soul
Are put to shame, and perfect child-like faith
Reposed in noble man will reap reward.

moves the king, who stands speechless and lost in meditation.

Iphigenia finishes the work of her brother. Once more she reminds Thoas of his promise and, appealing once more to his better self, utters the positive words: "Refuse thou canst not, therefore grant it soon." How could the king longer resist such noble people preferring such an innocent request with such great faith in him! Through the power of their words he gains the mastery over himself. He sacrifices his dearest wishes, and broken-hearted cries: "Then go!" Goethe might have ended the drama here, but he chose to carry the scene one step higher.

He could not allow his Iphigenia to part from Thoas on such terms. She can go from him only when assured of his loving sympathy.

Wert und teuer,
Wie mir mein Vater war, ſo biſt du's mir,
Und dieſer Eindruck bleibt in meiner Seele.
Bringt der Geringſte deines Volkes je
Den Ton der Stimme mir ins Ohr zurück,
Den ich an euch gewohnt zu hören bin,
Und ſeh' ich an dem Ärmſten eure Tracht;
Empfangen will ich ihn wie einen Gott,
Ich will ihm ſelbſt ein Lager zubereiten,
Auf einen Stuhl ihn an das Feuer laden,
Und nur nach dir und deinem Schickſal fragen.
O geben dir die Götter deiner Taten
Und deiner Milde wohlverdienten Lohn!
Leb wohl! O wende dich zu uns und gib
Ein holdes Wort des Abſchieds mir zurück!
Dann ſchwellt der Wind die Segel ſanfter an,
Und Tränen fließen lindernder vom Auge
Des Scheidenden. Leb wohl! und reiche mir
Zum Pfand der alten Freundſchaft deine Rechte. *

*Thou to me
Art dear and worthy as my father was,
And in my soul this feeling shall endure.
If e'er the humblest of thy subject race
Shall to mine ear the tone of voice recall

And now from the lips of the king comes a soft and loving "Farewell!"

It is always wonderful to see how ideas which have become ripe, and are essential to the progress of the world, burst forth simultaneously from the minds of the different leading spirits of the age. It is doubly wonderful when these ideas are at one and the same time embodied in artistic form.

In Germany this occurred in the case of the idea of humanity, which since the middle of the century had been gradually gaining recognition throughout Western Europe. During the same months in which Goethe was writing his *Iphigenie*, Lessing was at work on his *Nathan der Weise* in Wolfenbüttel, and the two works were doubtless completed only a few days apart, toward the end of March, 1779.

Iphigenie and *Nathan* are pre-eminently the German poems of humanity. In their fundamental principles, however, an essential difference is not to be overlooked. The contemporary conception of humanity, which valued a man independently of his religion, ancestry, and nationality, and only according to his intrinsic worth, found its classical expression in *Nathan*. This conception was for Goethe the very breath of life. "With my inmost soul I embrace my brother: Moses, prophet, evangelist, apostle, Spinoza, or Machiavelli," is an expression of his youthful enthusiasm,

> Which I in thy discourse am wont to hear,
> And if I on the poorest see thy dress,
> I will receive him as I would a god:
> A couch for him I will myself prepare,
> Invite him to a seat beside the fire,
> Inquire of thee alone and of thy fate.
> Oh, may the gods upon thy deeds bestow,
> Upon thy clemency, deserved reward!
> Farewell! Oh, turn and look at us once more,
> And give me back one kindly parting word.
> The wind will then our sails more softly swell,
> And tears will flow more gently from the eye
> Of parting friend. Farewell! Extend to me
> Thy hand as pledge of friendship true and tried.

which might just as well have served as a motto for *Nathan* as the Latin proverb which Lessing chose. Goethe himself raised the ideal of humanity to a still higher plane. In *Nathan* the ideal is: love all men, without prejudice. Translated into practical terms, this means: do good unto all men without distinction. But is not more than unprejudiced love required for the doing of good? How many people give offence with their love because, by reason of their own imperfections, they are unable to put themselves in another's place! With all their love they fail to see and feel the open wounds from which another bleeds. Only the perfectly pure man can do good in the highest sense. In his pure soul the life of his fellow-man is clearly mirrored. He sees another's burdens with perfect clearness, and can bear them, because he is himself without a burden. He imparts to his fellow a portion of his own purity, and, at the same time, faith in purity, which heals and saves. This sounds mystical and is mystical, but is nevertheless a fact substantiated by experience. In speaking of similar phenomena in the lower life of the soul we are accustomed nowadays to employ the term "suggestion."

Since only the pure man is capable of exerting the most ennobling influence, Goethe raised the ideal of humanity from patience, tolerance, and unprejudiced love, to a striving after pure human nature,[5] which naturally presupposes unprejudiced love.

Was der Dichter dieſem Bande
Glaubend, hoffend anvertraut,
Werd' im Kreiſe deutſcher Lande
Durch des Künſtlers Wirken laut!
So im Handeln, ſo im Sprechen
Liebevoll verkünd' es weit:
Alle menſchlichen Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menſchlichkeit. *

*May this faith-inspired creation
Of the poet's hopeful heart
Be throughout the German nation
Quickened by the actor's art.

These are the words in full of the very significant dedication, the closing lines of which were quoted above.

Iphigenie reminds us of *Nathan*, not only in substance, but also in form. Both Goethe, in *Iphigenie*, and Lessing, in *Nathan*, definitely adopted the iambic pentameter for the drama. Again we are surprised that they should have taken this step at the same time. *Iphigenie*, even in the first redaction, the so-called prose version, is written in iambic rhythm; indeed, many short passages of the dialogue form perfect groups of five iambics. It was apparently the poet's purpose, at the same time that he preserved the freedom of the rhythmical movement, to make the pentameter the normal form of the dialogue.

We are not surprised that Goethe, with his fine feeling for form, discarded prose for the serious drama. Even before *Iphigenie*, he had chosen the verse form for *Faust* and *Prometheus*, making effective use of *vers irréguliers* in the latter, while in the former he infused the ancient German *Knittelvers* with new and noble blood. In *Iphigenie* he employed the iambic pentameter, which the English poets had shown to be congenial to the Germanic drama, and which at the same time had the further recommendation of being the nearest approach to the majestic trimeter of the Greek.

What *Iphigenie* gained musically when Goethe recast it from prose into verse, even though the prose itself had a rhythmical movement, can be grasped only by the artistic sense. From the first words, pulsating with solemn feeling: "Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel des alten, heil'gen dichtbelaubten Haines" to the last, tearful "Lebt wohl!" there flows through the whole drama a soft harmony of full tones, perceptible only to the spiritual ear, because no elocutionary art can reproduce it.

But not only did verse introduce melodious sound into

> Tell it wide, as love beseemeth,
> By thy acts and words combined:
> Pure humanity redeemeth
> Every frailty of mankind.

the poem, it also improved and clarified the expression. A comparison of *Iphigenie* in prose and in verse reveals how rarely in a drama, the material of which is not drawn from everyday life, verse is a burdensome fetter, and how often, on the contrary, it is an incentive to higher achievement. To be sure, this is true only of the poet whose talent is great enough to save him from rounding out and padding his verses with meaningless phrases and epithets. In the prose version of 1781, which we quote for the sake of comparison, Orestes is made to say, for example: "Mich haben ſie zum Schlächter auserkoren, zum Mörder meiner Mutter"; in the versified form, in order to fill out the five measures of the second line, the words "doch verehrten" are inserted before "Mutter." This addition is so happy, so suggestive, and so in harmony with the spirit of Orestes, and the whole drama, that we can but praise the tyranny of the verse which compelled Goethe to add such a fine bit of colour. Likewise the result of the condensation demanded by the verse is not infrequently a most beautiful effect. A well-known passage in the prose version runs: "Ich bin aus Tantals merkwürdigem Geſchlecht." The form in verse is: "Vernimm! Ich bin aus Tantalus' Geſchlecht." No one will fail to recognise the gain in force resulting from the dropping of "merkwürdigem." In addition to these very short examples, two more extensive changes, out of a multitude which might be chosen, will suffice to illustrate the charming beauty and the forcefulness of the verse.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Mein Verlangen ſteht hinüber nach dem ſchönen Lande der Griechen, und immer möcht' ich übers Meer hinüber.

Und an dem Ufer ſteh ich lange Tage,
Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele ſuchend,
Und gegen meine Seufzer bringt die Welle
Nur dumpfe Töne brauſend mir herüber.

Act IV

Scene 5

Sie aber laſſen ſich's ewig wohl ſein am goldnen Tiſch. Von Berg zu Bergen ſchreiten ſie weg und aus der Tiefe dampft ihnen des Rieſen erſtickter Mund, gleich andern Opfern ein leichter Rauch.

Sie aber, ſie bleiben
In ewigen Feſten
An goldenen Tiſchen.
Sie ſchreiten vom Berge
Zu Bergen hinüber:
Aus Schlünden der Tiefe
Dampft ihnen der Atem
Erſtickter Titanen,
Gleich Opfergerüchen,
Ein leichtes Gewölke.

Goethe made innumerable changes in the text in addition to those necessitated by the rhythm. Individually they are small, yet collectively they mean an infinite improvement.

The first version had been composed in an atmosphere of documents and protocols, young recruits and starving stocking-makers. The gaps and rough corners, due to this discordant environment, could not be obliterated while Goethe was administering the duties of his office in Weimar. But when, on his Italian journey, surrounded by a world of great beauty, and with his mind free from care, he was able to throw his whole soul into the revision of the drama, he felt every slight unevenness in the development of the motives, every wavering in the tone, every clash in the colouring; and he did not cease to smooth out and tone down, deepen and elevate, until the poem resembled the noble works of plastic art which looked down upon him in serene majesty.

Iphigenie[6] was published in 1787, a year before the older drama of *Egmont*. The applause which it received was limited to small circles. The great majority of the people had expected something in the style of *Götz von Berlichingen*, and were somewhat taken aback to find the sometime revolutionist pursuing such a gentle and orderly course. Furthermore *Die Räuber*, together with Schiller's other earlier works, had added new fuel to the flames enkindled by *Götz*, so that *Iphigenie* found the general public unsympathetic.

The play was likewise slow in gaining recognition on the stage. Even in Weimar, where the performances of the earlier prose version in the Amateur Theatre had been so well received, it was not produced in the new form till 1802. This was Goethe's own fault, for he, as director of the theatre, might have put it on the stage at an earlier date. But he doubted whether the actors and the public were able to appreciate it. Schiller, more hopeful of success, overcame the hesitation of his friend, took charge of the rehearsals, and arranged for a production on the 15th of May. Goethe felt somewhat anxious as the evening of the performance approached. Not about the success—he was above that—but about the subjective foundation of the poem. From Jena, where he chanced to be staying, he wrote to Schiller: "I shall arrive in time to experience at your side one of the most wonderful effects which I have ever felt in all my life: the immediate presence of a condition now more than past for me." "Now more than past." The Orestes moods were past, and, more than these, his love for his redeemer, Frau von Stein. In later years Goethe was unable to endure the symbolical revival of the beautiful past which had come to such a deeply painful end. In 1827, when, on the recommendation of Zelter, the actor Krüger was to appear in the rôle of Orestes, Goethe did everything in his power to make the performance of the visiting player a success, but he himself was not present at the public presentation. "It is impossible for me to go," he announced to Zelter. "What good will it do me to recall the days when I felt, thought, and wrote it all?'

II

TASSO

Origin—Sources—Prototypes of the characters—"Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh"—Frau von Stein's inspiration—Drama written as experience furnished material and moods—The characters: the Princess, the Countess, Tasso, Antonio, Alphonso—Nature of the action—Analysis and criticism of the plot—Fundamental motive of the drama the disproportion between Tasso's poetic genius and real life—The problematic character of Antonio—Bearing and fate of Tasso—Ending of the drama—Tasso's salvation—A drama to be read, not to be played—Beauties of the poem.

WE now pass from Greece to Italy. During the first ten years of his life in Weimar Goethe unconsciously chose the countries of his longing as the scenes of his serious dramas.

Tasso the man and his great epic had been before our poet's mind since early youth. As a boy he had read *Jerusalem Delivered*, first in Kopp's translation, and later in the original. Certain parts of the poem appealed so vividly to his fancy and emotions that he dramatised them and, as we have already learned, performed them on his puppet stage with boyish enthusiasm and awkwardness.

The incidents in the life of the Italian poet doubtless possessed no less powerful a charm for him than did the poem. It was the will of Tasso's father that he should study jurisprudence, whereas his own heart burned with the desire to become a poet. At the university he made up his mind to satisfy the cravings of his own heart, and this step opened up for him the way to immortality. In the frontispiece to Kopp's translation young Goethe could see Apollo

placing the wreath of laurel upon the head of Tasso, who is kneeling at his feet, and Homer and Virgil attentively witnessing the coronation.

What echoes this story and this picture must have awakened in the breast of a boy who was destined to be a jurist, but saw his greatest source of happiness in life in the laurel wreath woven to decorate the poet! A minor circumstance which must have surprised him and appealed to his emotional nature was the fact that Tasso had an only sister, whom he dearly loved, and her name was Cornelia.

The personality of Tasso was again brought to Goethe's mind by an extravagantly sentimental article on the poet's life, which Heinse, whose chief source was Manso's biography, published in the *Iris* in the autumn of 1774. Here was portrayed in richer and warmer colours Tasso's life at the Court of Ferrara, his hopeless love for Princess Leonora of Este, and his struggle against enemies secret and open. Little more than a year passed and Goethe saw himself in an astonishingly similar situation. He too had come to a Court, had become involved in an aimless love for a noblewoman of the Court circle, and had to contend with many a stubborn enemy. But what attracted him still more was the parallel which he found in the Italian poet's life to his own consciousness of the never ending conflict between the visionary standards of genius and the prosaic standards of reality. Just when the thought of a poem sprang from the feeling of this parallel cannot be definitely determined. Under the date of March 30, 1780, Goethe made the note in his diary: "Good invention, *Tasso*"; but this does not necessarily mean the first flash of the idea across his mind: it may mean the first elaboration of the poem. Indeed the latter is the more probable. During the spring and summer *Tasso* was still slowly maturing in the poet's mind; the writing down began in October. Goethe had a great fondness for the subject. In *Iphigenie* he had been able to reflect only the soothing, enlightening, and gently guiding influence of Frau von Stein; in *Tasso* he was able to mirror

his own love, his poetic activity, his relation to the Duke, to the Court, to officialism—in a word, all the essential phases of his life in Weimar.

Ferrara is Weimar; Tasso, Goethe; the Princess, Frau von Stein, with a few drops of the blood of the Duchess in her veins; Alphonso, Karl August; Antonio, or Battista Pigna, as the character was originally called, Count von Goertz, with the added "cold, reserved shrewdness" of Minister von Fritsch; for the Countess Sanvitale there may have been more than one representative in the Thuringian capital and its environs.[7] The originals easiest to recognise are those of Tasso, the Princess, and Alphonso; and any one who is familiar with the history of Weimar during the decade from 1776 to 1786 feels, in reading the drama, as though he were listening to real conversations of that period. Goethe's entourage knew perfectly well the facts upon which the play was based, and that the prototypes of the characters were members of the Court circle. Herder had hardly read the first scene when he remarked to his wife, "Goethe cannot do otherwise than idealise himself and write everything out of his own experience," and Frau von Kalb recognised in the first three scenes Goethe, the Duke, Frau von Stein, and the Duchess. In later years, when interpretations were no longer dangerous, Goethe made no secret of how much personal and local colouring there was in the poem, so that he felt justified in saying of it, "It is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." To be sure, Eckermann, who reports the utterance, had no idea of how very true these words are. In fact, even the contemporaries of Goethe's first Weimar period divined it only in part,—with the single exception of Frau von Stein. In the earlier stages of the composition Goethe had reported to her step by step how he was revealing his love to her under the veil of poetry. This circumstance was the real source of his happiness and, in spite of his official burdens, kept up within him the fire in which he forged the drama.

Just as the action of the drama begins at a time when the Princess transports Tasso into a state of rapturous delight

by confessing more openly than heretofore her warm affection for him, so Goethe's work on *Tasso* begins at a time when Frau von Stein produces a similar state in him by revealing more and more plainly her love for him. With hopeful anticipations he writes the first act; with the blissful consciousness that she returns his love, the second. "Do you not observe," he wrote to her on the 25th of March, 1781, as he was about to begin what is now the first scene of the second act, "how love provides for your poet? Some months ago the next scene would have been impossible for me, but how easily it will now flow from my heart!" Two days later: "In the quiet of the morning I have pronounced a panegyric upon woman, and thee in particular." On the 19th of April: "As you will take everything to yourself that Tasso says, I have already written so much to you to-day that I can neither add anything to it nor improve upon it." On the following day: "I shall tell thee nothing of myself, nor of the morning. While writing at *Tasso* I have been directly worshipping thee." Three days later, plainly referring to Tasso's soliloquy in the second act: "I felt so happy this morning that a rain awakened me to *Tasso*. What I have written is certainly good as an invocation to thee; whether it is good as a scene and in its connection, I know not."

Thus he continued, and by autumn the second act was finished. Then began a series of difficulties. His assumption the following year of the presidency of the Chamber was not the only thing that was to interfere materially with his literary production; in the case of *Tasso* an inner obstacle lay athwart his path. "My production always kept pace with my experience." It was from the very beginning one of the essential features of the plot that Tasso and the Princess should be torn asunder. So long as Goethe was enjoying the most intimate companionship of Frau von Stein, whence was he to obtain the mood, the soul-need, the colouring to elaborate the tragic scenes of the descending action? *Tasso* remained for the time being a two-act fragment.

Goethe took the fragment with him to Italy, where it, too, was to be recast in nobler form. In February, 1787, after the completion of *Iphigenie*, he again took up *Tasso*, but it proved to be a refractory subject. He carried it with him to Naples, thought it over anew on the voyage to Sicily, and we are told that this time the plot was more or less finished. Nevertheless the play is lost sight of as though it had fallen into the sea. Neither in Sicily, nor on the return to Naples, nor during the greater part of the second sojourn in Rome do we hear anything of it. *Egmont* and some operettas are taken up in its stead. Not until February, 1788, when Goethe's life in Rome was drawing to an end, does it come to the foreground, and by the first of March the plot is completed.

It is easy to see why the continuation of *Tasso* was an impossibility, even in the poet's leisure hours in Rome. The mood was lacking, just as it had been in Weimar. This came, however, during the last months of his Roman sojourn. Not that Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein had assumed any ominous aspect, but the separation from Rome, the city in which he was now experiencing the greatest happiness of his life, gave him a keen appreciation of the pain which Tasso must have felt at the separation from his highest happiness. This is the correct interpretation of Goethe's letter from Rome to the Duke on the 28th of March: "As the charm which drew me to this subject sprang from the innermost depths of my nature, so is also the work which I am now doing in order to finish it very strangely connected with the end of my Italian career, and I cannot wish that it were otherwise."

In a former chapter we have heard with what passionate energy he devoted himself to the poem on his return journey, especially in Florence, whose pleasure gardens and splendid parks furnished the immediate background for the drama. From a little diary of his travels, found among his posthumous papers, we know that he worked during those weeks on the most painful act, the fifth. But fate was still to lend him more genuine colours. "Do you not observe how

love provides for your poet?" On the completion of the poem he might have repeated those words in a bitterly tragical sense. His love bond with Frau von Stein began to loosen shortly after his return, and was entirely sundered in July, 1789, when he put the last hand to the drama.

In *Tasso*, as in *Iphigenie*, the whole action rests with five persons: Duke Alphonso of Ferrara; his sister, Princess Leonora; her friend, Countess Leonora Sanvitale; Secretary of State Antonio Montecatino; and the hero of the play. All are important personalities, whom it will be to our advantage to know more intimately before we approach the plot itself.

The Princess is no longer young. Behind her lies a youth full of suffering. She was early separated from her highly revered mother, who was looked upon as a heretic. After the separation she was frequently afflicted with serious illnesses which brought her to the verge of death. For years she was obliged to forego all the joys of life; her physician forbade her even to sing, and singing was her accustomed means of quieting her sufferings and longings. Her great soul bore the sufferings and deprivations without a trace of bitterness; she looked upon them as providential visitations for her purification. Lately, however, she has enjoyed better health and greater liberty, but she still bears an expression of patience and resignation, and the marks of a quiet nature which through fear retires into itself. Her feelings and volitions find only subdued utterance. Her energies seem still somewhat impaired. She hesitates, acts slowly or not at all. Her passivity is more pronounced because of her limited knowledge of men. Her life has been spent in a sick-room: how is she to know the world? Hence, in the presence of difficulties, she is at her wits' end, or inclined to seek the wrong way out. The less she is capable and the less she feels herself capable of taking part in the real world, the more she turns to the spiritual.

She has sought to make herself at home in the most varied realms of knowledge and art: she takes a lively interest in everything great and beautiful; intercourse with scholars, poets, and statesmen is her great delight; and she has joined forces with her brother in gathering at the Court of Ferrara the most enlightened spirits of Italy. To this Court Tasso has come, and he has exerted a wonderful influence on her soul. She sees nature and life in the golden light of his poetry and is borne aloft above earthly things upon the wings of his soaring genius. At his side life for the first time begins to seem to her truly to be life. Her "hungry heart," feasting with him on the things of the spirit, feels the most happy contentment. She desires nothing more, nothing better.

By the side of the ethereal figure of the Princess stands her friend Countess Sanvitale, as a rose beside a lily. The Princess maidenly, pale, with traces of suffering, quiet, inexperienced in worldly matters, and timid in her actions; the Countess in the bloom of womanhood, captivatingly beautiful, healthful and self-possessed, vivacious and cheerful, well versed in worldly matters, and very desirous of trying her little hand in the management of the world. Like the Princess, she loves poetry; not merely for its own sake, however, but because it is incidentally a lustrous ornament of life, and may indeed, if fate so will, enshrine her name beside the poet's, so that the two shall go down through the centuries together. Although her thoughts incline somewhat toward externals she is not for this reason superficial. To be sure she does not possess the learning and versatility of the Princess, yet she is able, with her penetrating eye and fine discrimination, to search in the realms of the spirit, especially poetry, and find glorious treasures of thought for our delectation. She is amiable and complaisant, and it matters little that she cherishes withal the weak desire that her kindness be appreciated. Upon the whole she is is not as unselfish as the Princess toward the world. In reality her egotism does not go beyond the noble pride of being the patroness of a poet, and winning through him

fame with contemporaries and posterity. When her interest conflicts with her honesty and goodness, the latter win the victory. Thus the graceful, intellectual woman deserves the love and the confidence which the Princess, the Duke, and the Secretary of State bestow upon her. She is a charming ornament to the Court, at which she has for a considerable time been a guest.

Tasso is a genuine, great poetic nature. His fancy is continually at work assimilating the wealth of impressions which it receives from without.

Sein Auge weilt auf dieſer Erde kaum;
Sein Ohr vernimmt den Einklang der Natur;
Was die Geſchichte reicht, das Leben gibt,
Sein Buſen nimmt es gleich und willig auf:
Das weit Zerſtreute ſammelt ſein Gemüt,
Und ſein Gefühl belebt das Unbelebte. *

A rich inner life has unfolded within him. He has constructed his own world and enjoys it most deeply in solitude. There is only one human being by whom he is happy to be aroused from his sweet solitude, and that is the Princess. Her soul with its purity and depth has exerted an irresistible charm over him. In her presence he feels the most perfect sympathy, a mysterious harmony with the aspirations of his own spirit, and a wonderful soothing of his excited blood and his roving desires. His fancy transforms her into his muse, whom he worships in the melancholy of blissful love. Just as his love assumes the highest forms of which he is capable, so is every other feeling that arises in his breast magnified to extremes by his extraordinary sensitiveness. As love, so hate, trust, suspicion, joy, sorrow, hope, and despair. From heaven he plunges into hell, and in a moment mounts from hell to heaven again. His usual tendency is hellwards, for he is inclined

* Scarce doth his eye upon this earth repose;
His ear doth nature's harmony perceive;
The deeds of history, the facts of life
His bosom gladly folds in warm embrace:
His soul collects what widely scattered lies
And his emotions give the lifeless life.

to look upon the dark side of everything. This state of mind has been brought about by an unhappy youth and by the blows which visionary genius is ever receiving from harsh reality. In early manhood he came to Ferrara, where the Duke most generously granted him the leisure to complete his great epic, *Jerusalem Delivered*. A number of years have passed since his arrival, and still he is the youngest person about the Duke; he is indulged by him and the ladies as the favourite of the graces, but is looked at askance by the men of affairs.

The representative of these antagonistic men of affairs is the secretary of state, Antonio Montecatino. We may think of him as in the middle of the forties, from fifteen to twenty years older than *Tasso*. His character is very changeable and hence open to widely differing interpretations. We can form a perfectly clear conception of him only after we have carefully followed his bearing throughout the drama. For the present suffice it to say that he is a very shrewd and careful statesman, who has acquired in his calling great self-control, unyielding patience, and the art of concealing his purposes and feelings. He is highly educated, ambitious, and easily excited to envy.

Duke Alphonso, the simplest among the characters of *Tasso*, is kind, benevolent, truly noble in his sentiments, dignified and stately, gentle yet firm, equally devoted to the practical affairs of state and to the arts and sciences, valuing the latter as much because they satisfy his innermost longings as from the point of view of political prestige—a noble ruler, stripped of all the tyranny, violence, and whimsicality of the historical Alphonso and made over into a typical prince of the age of humanity.

These five characters are brought together by Goethe at a moment when all existing discords and conflicts are approaching a crisis and in this way a dramatic action is produced. The action is here, even more than in *Iphigenie*, confined to inner experience; for Tasso's drawing of his sword and his imprisonment in his own room can scarcely lay claim to more than symbolic significance. This being

the case, and the inner natures of the persons, from which the action flows, being so extraordinarily fine and rich in their qualities, the poet, in order to make the action at all comprehensible, needed a broad space in which to unfold the characters. Accordingly, the action will not attain a lively tempo until toward the end, and even then there will be interruptions. The slow unfolding of the plot is further made necessary by the fact that the intellectual atmosphere—an atmosphere in which Homer, Plato, Virgil, Petrarch, and Ariosto are live, active factors, and a laurel wreath is the starting-point of a conflict—could not be drawn *al fresco* with a few bold strokes of the brush, but required the many delicate lines of a steel engraving. Hence the drama does not resemble a battle on the open field, where blow upon blow falls in rapid succession; it resembles rather a skilfully played game of chess, in which the moves follow each other at well-measured intervals. The connoisseur follows the play with constant interest; he even welcomes the pauses, for they give him time to delve into the situation; but only toward the end does his interest amount to real suspense.

The poet transports us to the park of Belriguardo, a villa in the vicinity of Ferrara. The first blissful days of spring have come and the Princess and the Countess are enjoying them in happy comfort. They have put on pastoral costumes and are weaving wreaths and crowning with them the busts of Virgil and Ariosto. Much as Leonora Sanvitale enjoys the beautiful spring, she is nevertheless filled with sadness when she thinks that this same spring is to take her back to Florence, where a husband awaits her. In view of the approaching separation she is doubly sensible of the fine air of culture surrounding her here and bestows high praise upon the Prince and Princess who, faithful to the traditions of their forefathers, have made Ferrara a seat of the muses. Thus the conversation is imperceptibly turned upon Tasso. For the last few days songs of his in glorification of a Leonora have been found fastened to trees. Well-founded though the Princess's reasons

are for applying these songs to herself, nevertheless a glance at her namesake, radiant with beauty and cheerfulness, is enough to fill her with doubts and disquietude, which she seeks to rid herself of by means of searching questions in the disguise of badinage. But instead of receiving from her friend a full and frank assurance that the verses referred only to Princess Leonora, and could refer to no one else, she is told that Tasso may well have been thinking of Countess Leonora; that, as a matter of fact, however, he loved neither the Princess nor the Countess, but an ideal, to which he had lent the name. The Princess, somewhat bewildered by this declaration, is prevented from making further inquiries by the approach of the Duke. The first scene comes to an end without the thought once occurring to us that a conflict over Tasso might arise between the two women. Their bearing is too composed and noble. The Princess does not desire the sole possession of Tasso, she covets merely the greatest share in him; the Countess is satisfied with a share, without seizing upon this even with real passion. It is well that the poet did not turn our expectations in such a direction, for later he would have disappointed us sorely.

Neither does the long scene indicate anything else on the sunny horizon of Belriguardo to portend a storm. From the wonderful portraits which the two speakers sketch of themselves and of Tasso we have received the highest esthetic enjoyment, but this enjoyment has nothing about it of dramatic charm.

The second scene does not carry the development of the plot much farther. Tasso's morbid suspicions are spoken of at length, but the portrayal of this feature of his character is not especially urgent, inasmuch as it has nothing to do with the plot until toward the end. Furthermore, the arrival of Antonio from Rome is announced without any mention whatever of his long-standing opposition to Tasso. Thus we enter with equanimity the third scene, which brings Tasso upon the stage. He has finished his great epic and with an expression of his homage delivers it to the

Prince. The latter expresses his thanks and his admiration for the poet by having the Princess crown him with a laurel wreath, with which she had adorned a bust of Virgil. Tasso's real nature is now revealed to us. The wreath placed upon his head by the hand of his beloved transports him at once into a tremor of ecstasy.

O, nehmt ihn weg von meinem Haupte wieder,
Nehmt ihn hinweg! Er sengt mir meine Locken,
Und wie ein Strahl der Sonne, der zu heiß
Das Haupt mir träfe, brennt er mir die Kraft
Des Denkens aus der Stirne. Fieberhitze
Bewegt mein Blut. Verzeiht! Es ist zu viel! *

When his friends tell him that his fame deserves this recognition and persuade him to retain the wreath he is so enraptured with joy that his knees fail him.

Even at this point we do not as yet see the hinge upon which the plot of the play is to turn, but we feel at least that in Tasso's supersensitiveness there lies a germ which will produce fermentation. Consequently we look forward with some eagerness to the next scene, which brings Antonio into the exhilarated circle. Antonio has just returned from a long but successful mission in Rome. He receives most friendly greetings from all present, including Tasso, who looks forward with pleasure to associating with such a widely experienced man. After Antonio's eloquent description of the wisdom and efficiency of the Pope we have all the more reason to admire his skill in obtaining from the latter the concessions he had desired. The Duke congratulates himself on the day on which he has two great successes to record: the one which Antonio has brought him, the other Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*. By way of explanation to Antonio, the Duke says of Tasso, that he has

* Oh take the wreath, I pray you, off my head,
Take it away! I feel it singe my locks
And like a ray of sunshine, that, perchance,
Too hot might strike my head, it burns the power
Of thought from out my brain. My blood is stirred
To fever heat. Forgive! It is too much!

Ein weit entferntes, hoch gestecktes Ziel
Mit frohem Mut und strengem Fleiß erreicht.
Für seine Mühe siehst du ihn gekrönt.*

"Thou solvest me a riddle," replies Antonio, casting a glance at the poet's laurel wreath. Whereupon Tasso says:

Wenn du mein Glück vor deinen Augen siehst,
So wünscht' ich, daß du mein beschämt Gemüt
Mit eben diesem Blicke schauen könntest.†

Antonio answers:

Mir war es lang bekannt, daß im Belohnen
Alphons unmäßig ist, und du erfährst,
Was jeder von den Seinen schon erfuhr.‡

This mocking, contemptuous answer of Antonio is extraordinarily surprising. Toward Tasso, toward the Duke, who suggested the crowning, and toward the ladies, whose inward sympathy with the act cannot have been a secret to the secretary of state, the words contain such an offensive impoliteness that they would be felt as intolerable in any cultured society, to say nothing of a court circle. They are all the more astounding, coming, as they do, from the mouth of a man who is accustomed to moving in the polished society of courts and suppressing every untimely word and every inappropriate gesture. Even to one who is inclined to excuse such a person for making such a statement before such a forum, the implication is, considering its connection, and the modest, amiable bearing of Tasso, completely dumfounding. Goethe ought to have prepared us for it, and he could have done so early in the play by calling our attention to the deep-seated antipathy which has for years existed between Antonio and Tasso.

* With joyous spirit, with untiring zeal
He hath a far-off, lofty goal attained.
Thou seest him crowned with laurel for his pains.

† As thou before thy face dost here behold
My happiness, I would that thou as well
With that same glance my blushing soul couldst see.

‡ I long have known Alphonso gave rewards
Too freely; that which here befalleth thee
Hath heretofore befallen all his friends.

This he neglected to do. We first learn of it in the third act. In the first act we are left to believe either that the two meet for the first time, or that all is well between them. How Goethe came to make this mistake in the plot will be explained later.

The Duke makes no reply to Antonio's attack, although it is plainly his duty to allow no one to speak slightingly of the honour which he has bestowed upon the poet. He leaves the defence to the Princess, who in her gentle way remarks that Antonio will consider the honour justly and fully deserved when once he has seen what Tasso has accomplished. Antonio quickly turns the conversation in another direction, but aims a new arrow at Tasso by praising the hand which has crowned the bust of Ariosto, and pronouncing on this poet an eloquent eulogy, the verve and florid rhetoric of which sound strange indeed in the mouth of the statesman Montecatino, whom Goethe once characterised as the prosaic contrast to Tasso. That this man who here speaks of a poet "like one enraptured" should on another occasion call a poet, even though it be his opponent Tasso, an idler, strikes us as very strange. The Duke prevents a continuation of the conversation by asking Antonio to follow him and give him a more detailed report of his mission in Rome.

This scene ends the first act. At the end we have discovered one of the points upon which the action turns: the mutual repulsion between Antonio and Tasso. We have yet to find the other: the mutual attraction between Tasso and the Princess. From the first scene we were able to infer only that the Princess is attracted by Tasso. The strength of this attraction was not disclosed to us. Now we are to find this out, and at the same time to learn how matters stand with Tasso; whether he raves merely about an ideal, as the Countess has said, or whether his affections have strongly centered in one definite person. The poet desires that the exposition of the relation between Tasso and the Princess shall rise to a beautiful and fitting climax. For this purpose a further delineation of Tasso's character

is necessary, and this is accomplished in such a delicate way that at times the first scene of the second act seems to resolve itself into a purely academic conversation.

Tasso confesses to the Princess that Antonio's conduct has vexed him. Contrary to our expectation, she ascribes his vexation, not to Antonio's hateful remark about the laurel wreath, but to his biased praise of Ariosto. Tasso replies, with some justification, that this has not offended him, for he would be satisfied with even a part of Ariosto's worth and fame. But he also neglects to mention to her the offensive attack, although the coronation had filled him with supreme joy and he is still proudly wearing the crown upon his head. Hence one is tempted to think that those verses had not belonged to the original version of the play and that Antonio's jealous anger had merely vented itself by placing Ariosto in counterview with Tasso, which would have been in keeping both with the high surroundings and with the social cleverness of Antonio. The Princess and Tasso both pass over the real, sore offence to Tasso in silence, and confine themselves to the slighter one, which, according to Tasso's own confession, had made no impression upon him. On the other hand it was something entirely different that had depressed his sensitive soul: it was the description of the Pope's great executive ability. By the side of such activity he himself, with his writing of poetry, seemed as nothing. "I sank in my own eyes and feared I should vanish like an echo on the rocks." He now thirsts to do something tangible, practical, and even the breaking of lances in the tournament seems to him to have greater value than any poetic creation.

With this there suddenly dawns upon us the far-reaching manifold significance of Antonio's Roman stories, which at the first reading seemed too long for their purpose. But their employment as a means of bringing out Antonio's self-confidence more clearly was merely incidental. Their chief purpose was their effect on Tasso. They were intended to show us first of all his quick change of mood; how, when still at the height of his happiness over the coronation,

he is brought down to the depths of despondency by a mere story. They were to disclose to us, in the second place, how easily what he possesses may appear to him worthless, and what he lacks invaluable. They were doubtless also intended to give a reason for Tasso's failure to answer Antonio's attacks. Their second purpose was the central one. The description of the great practical activity of the Pope causes poetry, the basis of Tasso's whole existence, aside from which it is slender indeed, to appear to him as nothing. To be sure, he soon receives a new basis in love, but it is evident that as soon as this is also taken from him he must completely collapse.

In the course of the conversation Tasso and the Princess speak of the moment when they met for the first time. Tasso speaks of it with enthusiasm:

Welch ein Moment war dieſer! O, vergib!
Wie den Bezauberten von Rauſch und Wahn
Der Gottheit Nähe leicht und willig heilt,
So war auch ich von aller Phantaſie,
Von jeder Sucht, von jedem falſchen Triebe
Mit einem Blick in deinen Blick geheilt.
Wenn unerfahren die Begierde ſich
Nach tauſend Gegenſtänden ſonſt verlor,
Trat ich beſchämt zuerſt in mich zurück,
Und lernte nun das Wünſchenswerte kennen.*

The similarity of this relationship with that between Iphigenia and Orestes is obvious, the only difference being that in the case of Tasso the cure vanishes with the withdrawal of the goddess and is consequently always in need of renewal. He regrets that he has had so little opportunity

* How great a moment this for me! Forgive!
As doth the healing presence of a god
The madd'ning spell of an illusion break,
I, too, from every form of fantasy,
From every ill, from every wrong desire,
By one sole look into thine eyes was healed.
Whereas before desire, unschooled, was wont
To lose itself amid a thousand things,
I now ashamed withdrew into myself
And learned what things are worthy of desire.

to show her how his heart has been secretly devoted to her, that he has indeed often done things by mistake which could not but pain her. The Princess says that she has never failed to recognise his good intention, but that she has often wished that he knew how better to accommodate himself to other people. Thus, if he only would, he might have a useful friend in Antonio, and she has faith in her ability to bring about such a bond of friendship, but he must not oppose it as was his usual custom. "You must be friends." It is evident that since the hostile scene in the preceding act she feels the great need of making peace among those about her, and that her loving soul even hopes to conquer envy with love. She does not wait for Tasso's answer to her suggestion, but proceeds at once to urge him to enter into closer relations with the Countess. This is not inconsistent with her bearing in the opening scene. For meanwhile Tasso's declaration has made her absolutely certain that she is the only woman upon whom he has bestowed his affections; and immediately she feels a strong desire to secure from Tasso the same measure of friendship for the Countess as she herself bears her. Tasso's objection that the Countess's purpose was too evident in her amiableness, meets with a round reproof. In this way, the Princess adds, a man holds himself aloof from the world and indulges his soul with the dream of a golden age, which does not exist. Tasso eagerly takes up the thought of a "golden age," and in a highly poetical depiction of that phantom these words, expressive of his longed-for ideal, escape him: "Erlaubt iſt, was gefällt." * With this saying Goethe has brought out in most graceful form, in connection with Tasso's extravagant sentimentalism, the second dangerous element of his nature, unrestrained desire, the sovereign egoism of genius. To this saying the Princess opposes the other, "Erlaubt iſt, was ſich ziemt," † contrasting morals and licence, or, to use her sharper expression, morality and effrontery.

The dispute over the golden age has for the feelings

* That which pleases is permitted.
† That which is seemly is permitted.

of the speakers no other significance than many similar disputes, such as were customary between intellectual people in Italy during the Renaissance, one such having actually occurred in the garb of poetry in Ferrara between Tasso and Guarini. But in the midst of this debate between beaux-esprits we discover a yawning chasm which makes a permanent and truly genuine union of the two an impossibility.

In the further course of the conversation Tasso mentions the rumour in circulation that the Princess is about to be married. She pacifies him on this point, adding that she will be glad to stay in Ferrara, especially if her friends there are harmonious and happy. To this Tasso says:

O lehre mich das Mögliche zu tun!
Gewidmet ſind dir alle meine Tage.
Wenn dich zu preiſen, dir zu danken ſich
Mein Herz entfaltet, dann empfind' ich erſt
Das reinſte Glück, das Menſchen fühlen können;
Das Göttlichſte erfuhr ich nur in dir.*

He adds that whatever may be echoed in his poem he owes all to one woman; for to it he has confided the secret of a noble love. When the Princess refers to this statement, saying:

Und ſoll ich dir noch einen Vorzug ſagen,
Den unvermerkt ſich dieſes Lied erſchleicht?
Es lockt uns nach, und nach, wir hören zu,
Wir hören und wir glauben zu verſtehn,
Was wir verſtehn, das können wir nicht tadeln,
Und ſo gewinnt uns dieſes Lied zuletzt— †

* Oh, teach me how to do what in me lies!
To thee my days are consecrated all.
'T is only when, to sing in praise of thee
Or give thee thanks, my heart unfolds, that I
The highest bliss do feel that man may know.
My highest thoughts of God I owe to thee.

† And shall I of another merit speak
This song contains, at first to us unseen?
It draws us on and on; we lend our ears,
We hear, indeed we think we understand,
And what we understand we cannot blame;
Thus, in the end, this song allures our hearts.

this veiled confession of her love produces in him in turn unspeakable joy:

> Welch einen Himmel öffnest du vor mir,
> O Fürstin! Macht mich dieser Glanz nicht blind,
> So seh' ich unverhofft ein ewig Glück
> Auf goldnen Strahlen herrlich niedersteigen. *

The Princess, terrified at the flame she has enkindled, admonishes him to restrain himself. Only by means of moderation and resignation can he gain possession of what he longs for. Tasso scarcely hears the words of admonition with which the Princess leaves him. He is still intoxicated with the new happiness descending upon him and, whereas at the beginning of the scene he felt as if he were nothing, at the end he feels the strength to conquer a world. "Demand what thou will, for I am thine." She had demanded that he should seek Antonio's friendship. As Antonio appears at this moment, he at once makes the attempt.

In this way the two chief motives of the action, the contrast between Antonio and Tasso, and the harmony between Tasso and the Princess, are intertwined. Tasso's conflict with Antonio will be a result of his love for the Princess. But at the same time the Princess is bringing on her own tragic fate by means of the tragic element in her limited knowledge of human nature, which prompts her to urge Tasso to try to gain Antonio's friendship. Here again Goethe has with one stroke furthered several great ends in the construction of the play.

Three times Tasso begs Antonio with cordial feeling and flattering words for his friendship, instruction, and advice, and each time he is repulsed with cutting coldness and biting irony. Nevertheless Tasso preserves his composure. Only when Antonio again makes spiteful comments on his crown does he begin to defend himself, and when Antonio meets the defence with offensive presumption his

* What heav'nly prospect thou dost ope for me,
O Princess! If this splendour blind me not,
I see an endless happiness, unhoped,
On golden beams descending from on high.

blood is stirred with wrath. He draws his sword and demands immediate satisfaction, unless Antonio would for ever be despised by him.

At this juncture the Duke arrives. Tasso, in justification of himself, accuses Antonio of having acted toward him rudely and spitefully, and like an ill-bred, ignoble creature. We would eliminate from this characterisation nothing except the word "rudely." We can more readily understand his conduct here than in the first meeting, inasmuch as there are only the two persons present. Even the Duke notes that Antonio has committed a fault; yet, as the law strictly forbids the drawing of swords in the rooms of the palace, he must punish Tasso. Instead of banishment, imprisonment, or death, such as the law requires, he lays upon him the easiest conceivable punishment, confinement in his room, and even this he still further alleviates by the stipulation that the prisoner be his own guard. If Tasso's vision had not been for ever impaired, either by a veil of gloom or a dazzling golden light, he could not have failed to recognise in the nature of his punishment a new proof of the Prince's gracious disposition toward him. But instead of this he sees on the one hand nothing but his own moral right, on the other the purely abstract idea of punishment, or "imprisonment," as he calls it. He feels that he has been hurled down out of his heaven into an abyss which will prove to be the grave of his happiness. He surrenders to the Prince first his sword, then his laurel wreath, covering it with tears and kisses, as he pours out his melancholy sorrow in a most beautiful lyric lamentation. Then he betakes himself to his room and enters upon his imprisonment.

After Tasso's departure Alphonso upbraids Antonio for his behaviour and commissions him to conciliate Tasso this very day and in his name to give him back his liberty. Antonio submits at once to his sovereign's command, ostensibly with a feeling of guilt and shame. This scene closes the second act.

The action which, at the end of the first act, had begun

slowly to develop, but in the great opening scene of the second act had again come to a standstill, has in the third and fourth scenes risen with a bound to the climax, so that in the last scene of the act the descent is already beginning. A plot thus constructed is unfavourable to theatrical effect. The third act, usually the culminating point of a play, thus assumes the nature of a broad table-land, upon which the intercessions between the Princess, Leonora, and Antonio move back and forth.

What effect has the conflict between Antonio and Tasso had upon the Princess? This is the first question that interests us. Goethe answers it in the first two scenes of the third act. The Princess, disturbed and sorrowful, reproaches herself with having urged Tasso to offer Antonio his friendship, and with having hesitated to use her influence with Antonio beforehand. Not knowing herself what to do, she begs Leonora to give her friendly advice. The Countess observes rightly that the quarrel could doubtless easily be settled, but that this would not insure the future. Because of the great contrast between the two men each of them would have to be permanently influenced before peace and friendship would have any duration. To this end the best thing would be for Tasso to go away for some time, perhaps to Florence, where she herself could use her influence with him, while the Princess in the meantime was winning Antonio for Tasso. The Princess finds it hard to enter upon the plan of her friend, but she is obliged to admit that it is the most promising expedient, and so she consents, adding: "If I must be deprived of him I will give him to you more willingly than to any one else." The new sorrow which is laid upon her revives the memory of her painful past, but also of the deep happiness which she has enjoyed since the appearance of Tasso in Ferrara. With elegiac reflections on happiness, which is always hovering along before man and always eluding his grasp, the scene dies away like the notes of a zither.

The Countess, deeply moved by the sorrow of her friend, asks herself whether she was wholly honourable in her

proposal,—certainly a most eloquent testimony for her thorough goodness and honesty of heart. She does not conceal from herself the fact that selfishness may have entered into her advice, but neither does she know of anything better to propose. She consoles herself for her friend's sorrow by saying that the latter's emotions were not so violent as to cause any great rupture in her inner being, and that she herself would in any event bring back her friend to her in a short time. Meanwhile Antonio comes and immediately she determines to conciliate Antonio toward Tasso, although this is not in the interest of her plan. With renewed invectives against Tasso, and with an open confession that he envies the "idler" his laurel, and his favour with women, he declares his readiness to yield to the desire of the Prince and to extend his hand in peace. From the same selfish, politic motive he objects to the proposal of the Countess to send Tasso away from Ferrara for a time. "He is of value to our Prince. He must remain with us." "I will not assume the burden of the mistake; it might seem as though I were banishing him." As he can approach Tasso successfully only when the latter shall have been pacified he begs the Countess to perform this task. The Countess, left alone, says:

> Für diesmal, lieber Freund, sind wir nicht eins;
> Mein Vorteil und der deine gehen heut
> Nicht Hand in Hand. Ich nütze diese Zeit
> Und suche Tasso zu gewinnen. Schnell! *

In these four lines Goethe has given the Countess the appearance of being an intriguer and an egotist. There was no need of this, for he makes her act wholly otherwise. Her bearing is honourable and in accordance with Antonio's request. This makes the verses seem to be an unexpunged remnant of a version in which a less noble rôle was intended for the Countess.

> * This once, dear friend, we never can agree;
> My interest and thine do not to-day
> Go hand in hand. I 'll utilise this time
> And Tasso's favour seek to gain. But quick!

With this short soliloquy the third act comes to an end. To the chain of the plot it has added one very small link, the project of Tasso's temporary absence.

In the fourth act the sinking dramatic fire again flames up all the more brightly, and sustains this glow to the close of the piece. It is Tasso's passion which fans it like a stormy wind. Whereas in the third act he was entirely out of our sight, he is from now on, except in one scene of the fifth act, constantly on the stage.

At the beginning of the fourth act we find him in his room, lonely and melancholy. Leonora comes to see him and—quite against her own iterests—seeks to drive away his gloomy thoughts and to present Antonio to him in a more favourable light, and to dispel his fancy that he has lost the favour of the Duke. But no matter what she brings forward, it has no visible effect upon his delusion. If he is in error with regard to Antonio, he says, he is glad to err. He will and must hate him. "Nothing can take from me the desire to think worse and worse of him." And not only does he cling to his prejudice against the Duke, who, he says, has punished him like a schoolboy; he even adds to his lamentation by making the leisure which the Duke grants him a subject of complaint. Confronted by such a state of mind the Countess recognises the futility of any further attempt to reconcile and soothe him, and then she suggests to him that he leave Ferrara and go to Florence, adding, that at a distance he will the better see what love and faithful friendship have here surrounded him. Tasso is willing to consider the proposal, but asks first what the Princess thinks of it. "Will she gladly dismiss me, if I go?" Leonora: "If it is for your good, certainly."

It has wrongly been held that the Countess here misrepresents the truth. But the Princess had declared explicitly: "I see very well, it will be better thus." Could the Countess say more? Did she dare speak of the painful struggle that accompanied the Princess' decision? Would it not have been a grave breach of confidence, as well as an act of crass imprudence? Those who in any way had

Tasso's welfare at heart felt compelled, owing to his present state of terrible agitation, to urge him to leave Ferrara before he should commit some fatal, inexpiable blunder. Hence the bearing of the Countess is both prudent and loyal. Furthermore she fails to see her own "interest" even at the close of the conversation; for she again expresses to Tasso her ardent wish that he might be convinced that nobody hated him or was persecuting him, and she lays it upon his heart to accord Antonio, who is coming in a penitent mood, a friendly reception.

As a result of Leonora's efforts Tasso has only been confirmed in his gloomy imaginations. To him she has seemed to be the tool of Antonio to make him believe that he was doing Antonio and the Prince an injustice, whereas, as a matter of fact, the justice of his actions was as clear as the light of day. What most convinces him of the artifice of the Countess and Antonio is that she would persuade him to go to Florence. If the Medicis received him there with open arms Antonio would make use of this fact to undermine his standing with the house of Este. To be sure he would go away, he says; not to Florence, however, but farther than people thought. There was no longer anything here to hold him back. For even the Princess had turned coldly away from him, according to his interpretation of Leonora's words. He would never again be deceived by any appearance of friendship or kindness, and he believes that he can the more surely see through the dissimulation of others if he himself dissembles. These tactics, which he had observed toward the end of the conversation with the Countess, he continues in the following scenes. Accordingly, to Antonio, who announces his liberty to him and begs his pardon, he listens with composure and gives signs of quick reconciliation. When Antonio offers him his services he begs the secretary to procure for him the Duke's gracious permission to go on a journey to Rome. Antonio, quite amazed at this intention, earnestly pleads with him to give it up. In vain. Tasso remains firm in his intention and interprets Antonio's hesitancy—for the present falsely,

but for the later development correctly—as diplomatic shrewdness.

Mich will Antonio von hinnen treiben,
Und will nicht ſcheinen, daß er mich vertreibt.
Er ſpielt den Schonenden, den Klugen, daß
Man nur recht krank und ungeſchickt mich finde.*

Antonio's apology and the suspension of his own imprisonment ought to have taught Tasso how greatly all were interested in him; but instead, he tortures himself anew with the fixed idea that everybody is growing cold toward him. The supposed turning away of the Princess from him, which he had hitherto borne with composure, now rends his very heart in twain. More and more his mind wanders. The brighter it becomes about him, the darker his vision grows. The tragical issue is inevitable.

Between the fourth and fifth acts Antonio, at the command of the Duke, has made a second attempt to persuade Tasso to remain. This attempt is also unsuccessful. The Prince, considerably vexed over it, is calmed by Antonio's reference to Tasso's many failings and weaknesses which can nowhere be amended but abroad. Antonio begs the Prince graciously to grant leave to Tasso, who would return improved. Antonio then retires and Tasso approaches for the purpose of thanking the Prince—apparently with some genuine feeling—for the return of his liberty and the granting of his leave. At the same time he asks that the manuscript of *Jerusalem Delivered* be returned to him, as he wishes to submit the poem to a circle of connoisseurs in Rome for their criticism. Alphonso wishes to keep some time longer the manuscript, which he has only to-day received, promising Tasso a copy of it soon. Then he recommends to him in most friendly fashion to allow himself some time for rest and recreation before taking up the work again. Furthermore the sooner he should return the more welcome he

* Antonio would banish me from here,
And yet would not appear to drive me hence.
Indulgent, prudent he pretends to be,
That I the more may sick and clumsy seem.

would be. Even in this benign bearing of the Duke Tasso scents an artifice inspired by Antonio and congratulates himself that he too has practised dissimulation and has revealed nothing of his true emotions. Then the Princess appears. At the sight of her genuine personality all suspicion and all unnatural bearing vanish. His ear is open for her words, and when he hears from her that she and her brother still cling to him with unchanged interest, joyous trust re-enters his heart and he begs her to advise him what to do to obtain her own and her brother's pardon. Nothing, she says, but kindly to leave himself in their care.

Wir wollen nichts von dir, was du nicht bist,
Wenn du nur erst dir mit dir selbst gefällst.
Du machst uns Freude, wenn du Freude hast,
Und du betrübst uns nur, wenn du sie fliehst.*

To Tasso these words sound like a message from heaven. The more desperate he was a moment before, the gloomier the ideas he had formed of the Princess's disposition toward him, the more sensitive his soul had grown because of a series of agitations, the more stormy is now the revolution. He becomes intoxicated with blissful emotion:

Du bist es selbst, wie du zum erstenmal,
Ein heil'ger Engel, mir entgegenkamst!
. . . Ganz eröffnet sich
Die Seele, nur dich ewig zu verehren.
Es füllt sich ganz das Herz von Zärtlichkeit—
Sie ist's, sie steht vor mir. Welch ein Gefühl!
Ist es Verirrung, was mich nach dir zieht?
Ist's Raserei? Ist's ein erhöhter Sinn,
Der erst die höchste, reinste Wahrheit faßt?†

* From thee we nothing wish but what thou art,
If only thou be with thine own self pleased.
Thou giv'st us joy when thou thyself hast joy,
And only mak'st us sad when thou art sad.

† It is thyself, the same as when thou first,
A holy angel, did'st appear to me.
. . . My soul is opened wide
To show eternal reverence for thee.
My heart is wholly filled with tenderness—
'T is she before me stands. What feelings strange!

The Princess admonishes him to moderate his words, if she is to listen to him further. But he no longer has any control over himself.

Beſchränkt der Rand des Bechers einen Wein,
Der ſchäumend wallt und brauſend überſchwillt? . . .
Ich fühle mich im Innerſten verändert,
Ich fühle mich von aller Not entladen,
Frei wie ein Gott, und alles dank' ich dir!
Unſägliche Gewalt, die mich beherrſcht,
Entfließet deinen Lippen; ja, du machſt
Mich ganz dir eigen. Nichts gehöret mehr
Von meinem ganzen Ich mir künftig an.
Es trübt mein Auge ſich in Glück und Licht,
Es ſchwankt mein Sinn. Mich hält der Fuß nicht mehr.
Unwiderſtehlich ziehſt du mich zu dir,
Und unaufhaltſam dringt mein Herz dir zu.
Du haſt mich ganz auf ewig dir gewonnen,
So nimm denn auch mein ganzes Weſen hin.*

With these words he rushes toward her and presses her to his breast. The Princess pushes him away and flees. Tasso is about to hasten after her, when Alphonso, entering with Antonio, commands the latter to hold Tasso back, and he himself then leaves the stage.

The sudden change has cast Tasso with lightning rapidity

Is it confusion draws me toward thee?
Is 't madness? An exalted state of mind
That now first grasps the highest, purest truth?

* How? Doth the goblet's rim restrain the wine
That foaming rises, sparkling overflows?
I feel my inmost being wholly changed;
Of all my woe I feel the burden gone;
Free as a god, I owe it all to thee.
A power wonderful that governs me
From out thy lips doth flow; and wholly thine
Indeed thou makest me. Henceforth no more
Will aught of all myself belong to me.
Mine eye grows dim in happiness and light,
My senses reel. My foot no more me bears.
Thou draw'st me to thee irresistibly,
My heart undaunted makes its way to thee.
As thou hast won me all forevermore
Then take thou all my being for thine own.

back into his delusions, has, indeed, magnified them to weird proportions. His spirit is, as it were, shaken to pieces. A horrible conspiracy has been formed under the leadership of Antonio to ruin him. The Prince is a hypocritical friend who with smooth words has taken away from him his poem, the last and only thing between him and starvation; the Princess a courtesan who, with her petty arts, has enticed him from the right way; the Countess an artful go-between; and Antonio, who is standing before him, a crafty spirit of torture. Antonio admonishes him to think what he is doing and to put a stop to his calumnies, for which he can never forgive himself. But—much as in the scene with the Countess—he declares he will not stop and think, and that this raging and slandering does him good. He adds that, if Antonio is honest in his attitude toward him, he can prove it by helping him at once to get away from Belriguardo. Antonio is unwilling to let him go in this state, and insists on staying patiently with him till he has regained his composure. To which Tasso says:

So muß ich mich dir denn gefangen geben?
Ich gebe mich, und ſo iſt es getan;
Ich widerſtehe nicht, ſo iſt mir wohl.*

Exhausted, he gladly leans on Antonio. Scarcely have the hellish spirits that lashed his brain forsaken him when he again sees those he had scorned in their true character and feels his own guilt. Violent pain racks his soul that the Prince and the Princess should have left Belriguardo immediately after these stormy scenes, without a word of parting or forgiveness. "Oh, bring them back to me but for one moment," he cries, broken-hearted, but it is too late. Antonio urges him to take courage, saying that he is not as wretched as he fancies. He should compare himself with others and in this way learn to know what he really is.—"Thou admonishest me at the right time," says Tasso. To be sure, he feels that he can find no one who has suffered

* Must I surrender myself then to thee?
I do surrender, and the deed is done
Without resistance, and 't is well with me.

more than he has, comparison with whom may give him composure, but he recognises what he still has left, melody and speech to lament the fullest depths of his misery.

Und wenn der Menſch in ſeiner Qual verſtummt,
Gab mir ein Gott, zu ſagen, wie ich leide.*

At these words Antonio, by a grasp of the hand, strengthens the poet's confiding friendship in him.

Ich kenne mich in der Gefahr nicht mehr,
Und ſchäme mich nicht mehr, es zu bekennen.
Zerbrochen iſt das Steuer, und es kracht
Das Schiff an allen Seiten. Verſtend reißt
Der Boden unter meinen Füßen auf!
Ich faſſe dich mit beiden Armen an!
So klammert ſich der Schiffer endlich noch
Am Felſen feſt, an dem er ſcheitern ſollte.†

We have given the contents of the closing scenes without critical interruptions. Now we may turn with the greater freedom to the problems involved in them.

By means of Tasso's passionate declaration of love Goethe turned the action away from the conflict with Antonio, and back to the love-motive. The question might be asked, wherefore the conflict with Antonio, if Tasso, by reason of his offence to the Princess has already banished himself from the Court of Ferrara, and *vice versa*? The criticism may also be made that the addition of another motive only leaves the reader in doubt as to which of the two motives is the deciding one. But this criticism is just as unwarranted as, in the case of *Werther*, the criticism that it is doubtful whether the hero goes to ruin because of unhappy love or injured honour.

* While man by misery is rendered dumb,
A god gave me the gift to tell my woe.

† In danger I myself no more do know,
And to confess it am no more ashamed.
The rudder is in pieces, and the ship
In every seam doth start. Her bottom rends,
A yawning chasm opens 'neath my feet.
In peril both mine arms round thee I throw.
Thus, in the end, the sailor clambers safe
Upon a rock that fate would wreck him on.

The two motives are, in the one case as in the other, only the outgrowth of one and the same fundamental motive, which, in the case of *Tasso*, Goethe characterises as the disproportion between talent and life. By talent Goethe here evidently means genius, or more specifically poetic, artistic genius. To this belong by nature dreaminess, subjectivity, unrestraint, extreme delicacy and sensitiveness of feeling, and luxuriant imagination. These peculiarities of nature, unless overbalanced by other favourable conditions, throw the genius out of harmony with life, and this is the source of disappointments and defeats. It would have been a serious defect if Goethe had had the fundamental motive mirrored only in the reflection of one derivative motive. It is an evidence of extraordinary artistic tact that, as in the case of *Werther*, he revealed it by means of man's two strongest sentiments, love and honour.

Whereas in this respect it is easy to justify the poet's purposes, it will be very difficult to do so in considering Antonio's bearing. Shall we trust appearances, as critics usually do, and believe that the malicious, jealous, envious man is in the end transformed into a sincere, sympathetic friend? Let us once more consider his actions connectedly. Perhaps we may in this way grasp the changeable character of this man in its true colours.

Antonio replies to Tasso's friendly, innocent approaches with violent abuse. Hateful as this is, it would not preclude a subsequent more noble bearing. One might fancy that he had been the victim of a sudden burst of jealous anger, and that later on his better nature had asserted itself, he had put down his jealousy as petty, and had with genuine chivalry shown respect and friendship for his rival. Such might be the argument, let us say, after the first meeting of the two. But the situation is different after the second meeting. Here it is no longer a question of a sudden outburst of passion. Tasso, proud Tasso, as Antonio himself calls him, the poet highly esteemed and crowned with laurel by the Prince and the Princess, the man who has finished a great work, of the immortality of which he has

reason to be certain, begs Antonio, his opponent, the man who has just insulted him, for his friendship, and does it with profound modesty and genuine cordiality, and without a trace of treasured grievance. Three times he repeats this request, each time with more exalted feeling and in terms more flattering to Antonio:

Sei willkommen!
Dich kenn' ich nun und deinen ganzen Wert,
Dir bied' ich ohne Zögern Herz und Hand.

Ich weiß, daß du das Gute willst und schaffst,
Dein eigen Schicksal läßt dich unbesorgt,
An andre denkst du, andern stehst du bei.
. . . . . .
O nimm mich, edler Mann, an deine Brust,
Und weihe mich, den Raschen, Unerfahrnen,
Zum mäßigen Gebrauch des Lebens ein!

Dich ruf' ich in der Tugend Namen auf,
Die gute Menschen zu verbinden eifert.
. . . . Gönne mir die Wollust,
Die schönste guter Menschen, sich dem Bessern
Vertrauend ohne Rückhalt hinzugeben!*

Antonio may have been "shrewd" enough to reject the friendship, he may have been cold enough to be unmoved

* I bid thee welcome.
I know thee now and all thy worth as well,
Without demur I give thee heart and hand.

I know that good thou dost both will and do,
Thine own fair fate causeth thee nought of care,
Of others dost thou think, dost others aid.
. . . . . .
Oh, press me to thy bosom, noble lord,
And teach my rashness, inexperience,
The mystery of temperance in life.

I call on thee in virtue's sacred name,
Which seeks good men in sympathy to join.
. . . . Vouchsafe to me the joy,
The fairest good men know, of faith-inspired,
Complete devotion to a nobler soul.

by this warm, humble devotion of a talented man whom he has offended; but he had not the slightest occasion for treating these advances with insulting scorn. Such action in such a case can proceed only from a heart whose every evil impulse is aroused by jealousy. But Antonio is possessed of enough clear-headedness and self-control to keep his emotions in bounds, when it serves his purpose. This is the second element of his nature. His actions are calculated with reference to his purpose. His purpose is to crowd Tasso out of Ferrara by every means that will not expose himself. He cannot tolerate the brilliant rising sun of this genius. He declares without reserve to the Countess Sanvitale that he will never willingly share with Tasso the laurel wreath and the favour of woman.

If the interpreters, instead of exhausting themselves in attempts to harmonise the conflicting elements of the drama, or seeking their explanation in the history of its origin had kept this passage in mind, they might easily have found the key to Antonio's character.

Let us further consider Antonio's actions. By his manner of declining Tasso's friendship he has offended the poet most bitterly. When Tasso in turn speaks somewhat sharply, Antonio shifts to the tone of bold presumption and calls the author of *Jerusalem Delivered*, who had just given him so strong a proof of his moral greatness, an ill-behaved, ill-bred boy, who, however, was still young enough to be improved by good discipline. To Tasso's answer,

> Nicht jung genug, vor Götzen mich zu neigen,
> Und Trotz mit Trotz zu bänd'gen alt genug,*

he replies maliciously,

> Wo Lippenspiel und Saitenspiel entscheiden,
> Ziehst du als Held und Sieger wohl davon,†

comparing him later to the populace, which vents its feelings in words. When Tasso appeals from words to swords,

* Not young enough before false gods to bow,
Yet old enough defier to defy.

† From battles where the lip and lute decide
As hero thou and victor shouldst emerge.

Antonio shields himself behind the peace of the castle, and when Tasso challenges him to step outside the castle, he decamps with the flimsy excuse: "As thou shouldst not challenge, I follow not." So long as he is ignorant of the Duke's opinion he urges the latter to mete out severe punishment, for this purpose basing his plea, not only upon the sacred peace of the castle, but also upon the protection to which he himself as an official has a right. As if Tasso had attacked him during the performance of his official duty! But as soon as he sees the Duke's opinion of the case he turns around and makes the fine distinction, "Perhaps I may have offended him as a man; I have not insulted him as a nobleman," confesses his guilt and shame, submitting himself with the obsequious turn: "It is very easy to obey a noble lord whose every command is convincing."

In spite of his pretended feeling of guilt and shame, Antonio, as soon as he has the Countess's ear, begins again in the old way to inveigh against Tasso. He is very far from intending a genuine reconciliation, he cannot think of it. Tasso, so long as he enjoys the favour of the Court, is and will remain his enemy. He employs the Countess in an attempt at meditation, and makes an attempt himself, but only for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Prince. This displeasure would be all the greater if Tasso should leave Ferrara because of the injury to his sense of honour. Accordingly, Antonio must, in his interview with Tasso, make every effort to dissuade him from his determination, and hence appears in this scene as a sincere friend. But scarcely is he relieved by the apparent reconciliation which follows, and by Tasso's pretended reason for leaving, when he fills the Duke's ears with new complaints against Tasso, under the pretence of consoling him for Tasso's departure, but in reality further to justify his own conduct and especially to do everything in his power to prevent the poet's return. There is no other possible explanation of Antonio's ardour in repeating to the Prince well-known incidents in minutest detail and presenting Tasso's whole character

in an intolerable light. Nor is there any other possible explanation of Goethe's repetition of things which we have already heard at greater length in the first act. The poet desires at this important juncture to warn us again not to allow ourselves to be deceived by the bearing which Antonio assumed a moment ago and will assume later. If nothing else betrayed Antonio's real sentiments in this scene, his actor-like animation in portraying Tasso's dealings with the physician, so as to make the poet appear thoroughly childish, surely would. How brief and how great the Duke's answer is: "I have often heard this and often excused it."

Tasso is guilty of a great offence against the Princess, which cuts off every possibility of a return to Ferrara. Here the critics would have us believe that it was magnanimous and noble-minded of Antonio to offer Tasso assistance and not to rejoice over the poet's ruin. It would have been supreme folly if he had done otherwise. Antonio as a shrewd man could but say to himself in this moment: "Now is the time to play the good and helpful friend. I shall gain in two directions. I shall put Tasso under obligations to me and shall shine before the Duke and his sister in a favourable light."

He was for other reasons not at liberty to forsake Tasso. The Duke had commanded him to hold back the poet (V, 4) and to care for him (V, 1, end). Hence it cost him very little effort to say: "I shall not leave thee in this hour of need." He is at all other times extremely careful to say nothing to give Tasso true consolation; whereas he might have held out to him the hope, if not of a return to Ferrara, at least of an inward reconciliation with the Prince's house. On the contrary, he throws up his hands with astonishment and represents Tasso's deed as something monstrous, which has overwhelmed him with amazement. Likewise, when Tasso laments that he is a beggar and exposed to hunger, Antonio fails to pacify him by assuring him that the Prince will care for him; and when Tasso, racked with most intense grief, deplores the necessity of departing from his beloved Prince and Princess without their forgiveness, it does not

occur to him to say what would have suggested itself to any one else in his place as the first and most natural reply: "Compose thyself. Thou wilt obtain their forgiveness. I shall do everything in my power to bring it about. The forgiveness will be granted thee sooner if these beloved friends learn from me in what deep contrition and what inexpressible sorrow thou hast departed." All the consolation he offers is contained in the brief admonitions, "Man thy soul" and "Remember what thou art,"—certainly clever counsel, but not necessarily accompanied by any feeling.

Antonio has a great intellect and this assures him great success where nothing but intellectual calculation is required. But he lacks the refinement of feeling characteristic of a noble soul. Hence in difficulties where this alone can find the right solution he is "injudicious." He then unconsciously discloses his selfish instincts, becomes overweening, tactless, and inconsiderate. He is also highly educated, but education is not a matter of the heart with him, not the result of a true inward craving; it is only an ornament and an excellent aid in the strife of the world.

If we view Antonio in this light all the apparent contradictions, whether great or small, in his character are easily accounted for. His enthusiastic praise of Ariosto, and his raptures, are no longer in contradiction to his characterisation of the poet as an idler, and to his other realistic tendencies. His enthusiasm for poetry is purely artificial. It is cold rhetoric, carefully calculated for the purpose of disparaging Tasso, without letting this disparagement appear as the outcropping of envy or of barbarous hostility to poetry. He remains the "prosaic contrast to Tasso," in spite of the belletristic atmosphere with which he envelopes himself.

The favourable opinions of the other characters concerning Antonio must not be given too much weight as opposed to our interpretation. In the great quarrel scene Tasso merely accommodates himself to the view of the Princess, who is naturally inclined to believe the best of everybody.

Furthermore Antonio had no occasion whatever to show himself to her or to any other influential member of the Court as anything other than an honest, noble man. Nevertheless he was unable to deceive persons of more careful observation. The Countess's appreciation of his worth sounds reserved, and we feel that the Duke considers his talent as secretary of state very great, but his character very ordinary

In the character-picture of Antonio, drawn with extremely fine, perhaps too fine, art, there remains but one single incoherency, the first scoffing disparagement of the wreath. This is not a false stroke in the picture, but one for which there is no apparent motive. That it was inserted as an afterthought we have already shown to be probable. The whole scene, which gave the poet great pain, was inserted very late, about Easter, 1789, when, except for a few scenes, the play was already finished. Why Goethe made the insertion is obvious.[8] He wished at the very beginning to show Antonio in the full strength of his envy and of his self-sufficiency, so greatly magnified by his victories in Rome. Antonio is to seize at once the opportunity to drive into a corner the poet-favourite whom he has long hated and whom he now hates trebly, and at the same time to instruct and warn the Court. The digression in praise of Ariosto seeming to Goethe too weak for the carrying out of this purpose he inserted a more forcible passage, and, as is usually the case with such insertions, did so without considering or even noticing the inconsistencies which it caused.

Another problem which the end of the poem brings to our attention is the bearing and fate of Tasso. Twice we see him pass through a rapid change. We have been accustomed to this in him, but the causes have always been easy to see. Here, however, they are hard to discover. This is especially true in the first instance. Tasso sees before him a great conspiracy and hurls mad invectives against the parties to this conspiracy. Then suddenly this phantom has vanished and those he has inveighed

against seem to him dear, loving friends. The few words that Antonio speaks to him cannot have produced this result, for Antonio is one of those coloured by his illusion, and appears as a party concerned. Furthermore we have observed how stubbornly Tasso refuses to listen to opposing arguments, even when they are well founded. The change comes rather from within himself. After Antonio' first appeal to him Tasso says: "Leave me my half-conscious happiness, lest I first bethink me and then lose my senses. . . . In the hellish torment that annihilates me calumny becomes merely a soft moan of pain." These words doubtless mean: "I know that I am losing noble people, not miserable creatures, as I said in my rage. But I do not want to become fully conscious of it, lest I lose my senses. The calumny was only a symptom of my overwhelming pain." In other words, by his very act of terribly distorting things and persons Tasso has been made conscious of the unreasonableness of such a thing. But the need of spending his rage has held him fast to his wrong course. The moment this need is satisfied the complete revulsion begins. This revulsion plays into the hand of Antonio, who helps it on by his apparent sympathy. Whether it is so complete that Tasso now considers Antonio his friend is more than doubtful. Let us remember that to Antonio's declaration, that he cannot let Tasso depart in such distress, Tasso replies: "I must surrender myself then to thee." Let us further remember that Tasso has not a word of gratitude for Antonio, nor of sorrowful regret for having misunderstood and calumniated him—all his remorse is for what he has said and done to the Prince and Princess—and that in the closing verses he warns him not to think too highly of himself. Let us not be deceived either by the appellation "noble man." It has here merely the significance of conventionality, is only a token of respect paid to those of highest rank, as in other passages of the play. This is especially evident in the fourth scene of the third act (l. 2047), where Leonora is very little impressed with the nobility of Antonio's mind. The simile of the "rock," of which Tasso makes use at the

close, tells very strikingly what Antonio now is to Tasso—a stay in need, but not an attractive place where one would dwell; and hence it is wrong to think that from now on Tasso will go through life in league with Antonio, and that in this league idealism and realism celebrate a prosperous union and reconciliation. With realism in the form of Antonio, Tasso can never be permanently united. And as this is inwardly impossible so is it also outwardly. What is Antonio to be to Tasso when the latter departs?

Shortly before the end of the drama a second change takes place in Tasso. He feels himself annihilated. At this point Antonio admonishes him to remember what he is. Antonio wishes to bring back to him the remembrance of his greatness as a poet, and to arouse his self-consciousness. This harmonises with Antonio's ideas. Tasso is reminded by the admonition of something else, of his poetic gift. God, he says, endowed him with melody and speech, and by means of these he can liberate himself from his torments. The consciousness of the divine power resting within him is again restored after he has lost it in his false striving after activity. The consciousness of being a poet gives him hope of liberating and saving himself in the future. Much as this hope nerves him for a new lease of life, still he does not overlook the despair of his present condition. In this despair he grasps Antonio, as a ship-wrecked sailor does a rock, that from it he may escape in the boat of poesy to another new land.

Is Tasso then saved, and the tragic outcome transformed into one that is not tragic, and that not merely for the moment but for all time to come? This question has usually been answered in the affirmative, and rightly, as it seems to us. At any rate the affirmative answer coincides with the poet's opinion. Goethe had much too lofty a conception of the power of poetry, had much too often felt its wondrous magic in a similar situation, to behold Tasso's future in a tragic light. We have other special indications of this. Late in life Goethe once sought by means of poetry to heal himself of an unfortunate love-passion, and placed as a

motto before the Marienbad *Elegie*, the poem that brought him the first alleviation of his pain, the words of Tasso: "While man by misery is rendered dumb, a god gave me the gift to tell my woe." How could he have done this if he was not of the opinion that Tasso would be saved by the gift of poetry? And, further, the aged man of eighty-two falls victim to a Tasso mood; every charcoal-burner seems to him happier than he himself is. "A man like me" has packed the boat so full that he must fear every moment to go down with the whole cargo. But, he adds, looking at the past and the present, as a poet he always remembers that "to land" rhymes with "to strand." Our belief in a non-tragic ending of the poem must be strengthened, even more than by these indications, by the parallelism existing in Goethe's own mind in his melancholy hours between his position on his flight to Italy and that of Tasso at the end of the drama. Goethe had been torn by circumstances away from his beloved one, away from a court which honoured and appreciated him, and away from a life of material security, without having any assurance, under the conditions which he stipulated for the future, that he would ever again regain what he had given up. Accordingly, he looked upon the separation as a severe crisis. "I have only one existence, and this time I have risked it all and am still risking it. If I come out physically and spiritually sound, if my nature, my spirit, my good fortune, tide over this crisis, I shall repay thee thousandfold what is to be repaid. If I perish, I shall perish; in any event I was no longer good for anything." Thus he wrote from Rome January 20, 1787, to Frau von Stein. His nature rises superior to the crisis, which has proved to be the greatest blessing for him. He finds himself again a poet and determines that only as such will he live henceforth. He is cured of many other wrong desires, but especially of that for practical activity. The minister Goethe is dead,[9] henceforth the poet can lead a freer and more beautiful life.

Goethe must have imagined that the same thing would result from the great crisis in Tasso's career. Tasso is in

an unwholesome mood, in which his impulses run riot in a thousand directions, obscuring the true character of his soul. The Duke, so favourably disposed toward him, has long recognised this and has accordingly wished that Tasso might plunge for a time into the current of the world, bathe himself back to health in its flood, and then "go the new way of fresh life." What Alphonso would bring about in a painless, peaceful manner—but too late, perhaps —is quickly accomplished by struggle and sorrow. Tasso is torn away from the Court and from hopeless love, the chief sources of his unwholesome moods. The remedy which the Princess has sought for him in vain he himself finds in remembering his natural calling in life and in limiting himself to it. "Man is never happy till his unlimited striving prescribes its own limitations," we read in *Wilhelm Meister*. The old Tasso, who thirsts for practical activity and pursues an unattainable love, dies; a new and glorified Tasso, who finds his only happiness in poetry, arises from the tomb. "Die and come into being!"[10]

There can scarcely be any doubt then that Goethe would have his hero saved by the divine power of poetry dwelling within him; but there arises the other question, did Goethe succeed in inspiring his readers with the same faith? To this many will be inclined to answer in the negative. They will not be able to convince themselves that the eccentric, overwrought poet is really saved. They will believe that new conflicts will constantly be presenting themselves to him, until he, like Werther, is consumed by them. But in this comparison with Werther there is one thing they overlook: Werther returns to the place where danger lurks and lacks an occupation to busy his powers and to satisfy and control his desires. Tasso, on the other hand, departs from the region of danger and finds what Werther lacks. There is still another thing they overlook: It was certainly not Goethe's idea that Tasso would henceforth escape all conflict with the real world. This supersensitive, fantastic man will, so long as he sojourns on earth, experience pain and disappointment, yet he will

always, by means of poetry and self-control, gain an ever-increasing power of overcoming all sorrow. This, in our opinion, was Goethe's thought, and, thus interpreted, the solution becomes credible and satisfactory.

After the completion of *Tasso* Goethe, as he had done in the case of *Iphigenie*, kept away from the play because he had saturated it with his heart's blood. In 1827 he made the remarkable confession that he had never read *Tasso* through after it was printed, and that in the theatre he had heard "at most only portions of it." And this in spite of the fact that the play was often performed under his direction. The first time was on February 16, 1807, while, in the east, Prussia was struggling for her existence. It was very favourably received and was repeated March 21st. At this repetition Frau von Stein was present. "Read *Tasso* again," she wrote to her son, "every line is pure gold. It has never before so completely passed into my soul." The favour with which the play was received in Weimar, later also in Leipsic and Berlin, was not of long duration. Nowadays it is but rarely performed, and only in a narrow circle does it meet with an enthusiastic reception. It is hardly to be supposed that it will ever be otherwise; for, high as one may place the drama as a poetic creation, one must nevertheless confess that it is not a play for the stage. The action often moves forward very haltingly, and the scenes with least action are spun out to greatest length. The stage, however, demands development and progress, whether inward or outward. The extraordinarily tender beauties with which the play is resplendent, the Raphaelesque soul-painting, now faintly suggestive, now glowing with saturate colour, the subtle purposes of the composition, the thoughtful discussions of deep, enticing problems of life and history, the delicate elegiac tinge which marks the emotions, the noble gracefulness of the dialogue, the great human sentiments, the atmosphere of the time and place, and the wonderfully flexible verse, no more musical than in *Iphigenie*, but more individual, which readily accom-

modates itself to every character and every situation—all that which in reading transports us upon soft, bright-coloured clouds, as it were, to another sphere—can but be weakened by staging or, if fully preserved, must become a hindrance. Whereas in reading we are so bound by the magic of the part before us that we do not think of the progress of the whole, but would always gladly exclaim, "Oh, prithee, tarry, thou art so beautiful"—in the theatre, on the other hand, we become impatient when in the slow-moving part we lose sight of the whole. The impatience does not disappear till the last acts, which are filled with the highest dramatic suspense. In these the poet has, in a certain sense, made up for the lack of dramatic force in the preceding acts. But even here the final impression, upon which so much depends, is disturbed by the lack of forcefulness in the working out of the poet's purposes. No matter how much the actor may help out the poet here, he will nevertheless dismiss the unprepared spectator with a feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome of the poem.

Even though the drama be impressive on the stage only for a narrow circle of connoisseurs, shall we regret this? Does this imply a reproach of the poet? Goethe has made of the refractory material all that was to be made of it, and it is well for us that he did not allow its nature to discourage him from giving it dramatic form. We may examine all the dramas in the literature of the world, and none of them will be found equal to *Tasso* in specifically poetical qualities. It has predominantly the feeling and the colouring of a lyric poem. This may be its weakness, but it is also its incalculable greatness.[11]

III

AFTER THE RETURN FROM ITALY

Goethe relieved from routine of office is nevertheless unhappy—Weimar finds him greatly changed—His attitude toward former friends—No longer needs mentor or confidant—Isolation—Rupture with Frau von Stein—Her grief—Their later relation to one another—Goethe's conscience marriage with Christiane Vulpius—Her character—Her ostracised position—Goethe's home uncongenial to him—His social liberties not curtailed by marriage—The right view to take of his life—Completion of the new edition of his collected writings in eight volumes—Publication of selected chapters on his Italian journey—*Metamorphose der Pflanzen*—Second journey to Italy—*Venezianische Epigramme*—Observations on the Venetian school of painting—Theory of the vertebral structure of the animal skull—Goethe's sensuous life in Venice—Arrival in Venice of the Duchess, Meyer, and Bury—Journey to Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Mantua—Return to Weimar—Goethe joins Duke in Silesia—Makes acquaintance of von Schuckmann—Von Schuckmann's characterisation of Goethe—Tour of Silesia, with excursions into Bohemia and Galicia—Impressions of the Slavs—Visits Körner in Dresden—Establishment of the Ducal Court Theatre—The troupe—Goethe becomes director—Significance of his directorship—*Euphrosyne—Beiträge zur Optik—Farbenlehre.*

GOETHE was again in Weimar. Even before he had left Italy, he had recognised the impossibility of resuming his former official duties. All grounds for his continuing in office had vanished. He no longer felt the need of such an occupation as a counterpoise to his imagination, after he had begun to cultivate the natural sciences on such a broad scale. So he had written to the Duke from Rome, asking that the freedom from regular duties, which he had enjoyed while away, be continued after his return. "Receive me as a guest, let me

enjoy life at your side, realising the full measure of my capabilities, and my strength, like a spring that has been opened in high ground, and its water purified and gathered into a reservoir, will be easy to turn in whatever direction you may desire."

The duties which he was willing and able still to perform for the Duke and the country were not to be confining, and he left it to the Duke's fine appreciation of his peculiar needs to determine their extent. This the Duke did with a discrimination of which he alone was capable. He relieved his friend of all the burdensome official tasks, and left him in the enjoyment of the honours of his position. Goethe remained a member of the Council and of the Chamber, in the latter case with the understanding that, if he cared to attend the meetings, he was entitled to take his seat in the chair reserved for the Duke himself. His regular official duties were from now on limited to the supervision of the Institutes of Art and Science, duties which were not only congenial to his inclinations, but were also very frequently promotive of his personal ends. All this the Duke had arranged before Goethe returned home. Accordingly, the poet found on his return a most favourable condition of affairs. His position in the duchy was the most exalted possible, his authority, if he wished to make use of it, was as great as ever before, and along with a generous salary he was given sufficient leisure to carry out his literary and scientific plans. In his letters from Italy he had asked for nothing more, and, dear as was to him his life in Rome, nevertheless he hoped that the greater quiet at home, and the nearness of the University of Jena, would enable him to work more easily and more rapidly there than on the banks of the Tiber.

And yet, after his return, when any German poet or scholar might have envied him his position—and there were, in fact, many who did envy him—we find in him the same depression of spirit in which we left him at his departure from Italy. His Tasso-nature saw only what he had given up, not what he possessed, and had regained. As he was unable

to tear his thoughts away from Rome, his Weimar friends were soon put out of humour by his sighs about the sky and the soil, about men and things, about what he had lost, and about his present surroundings, and by his plainly revealed purpose of again leaving home at the earliest possible moment. They were justified in replying to his jeremiads, that the sun shone and gave warmth in Germany as well as in Italy, that the roses bloomed there too, that the shade of the linden and the fir was just as pleasant to rest in as that of the cypress and the pine, that what Germany lacked in art was richly compensated for by science, and that they themselves ought to be valued just as highly as he prized his friends in Rome.

But the thing that chilled them more than his complaints was the change which his entire being had undergone.[12] As a result of the deep insight into men, nature, history, and art, which he had gained during his two years' absence, the disparity which had always existed between him and his environment was extraordinarily increased.

Besides, there was a lack of the close and merry companionship in study and in life, such as he had enjoyed in Rome, and formerly in Weimar, which might have made the effects of such a disparity less perceptible on both sides. Consequently, to his friends he seemed a dispenser of kingly riches and generosity, who in intellectual matters associated with them as an unaffected, but exclusive, aristocrat. They all felt that nothing could be given him in return, not even when he bestowed friendly attention upon them. But they were not content with the rôle of enthusiastic, admiring listeners. In material things it was much as in spiritual: he bestowed favours upon everybody, but accepted none and needed none, except, perchance, from the Duke.

With his insight into the world his insight into his own nature had grown wonderfully. He was now prepared to act as his own mentor and guide, and was able to bear alone the burdens which fell upon him. Hence the need of disclosing to others the secrets of his heart was completely

outgrown. From now on he could be wholly objective, and it was his desire to be so. Indeed, he was now more inclined to have people about him, and to mingle with them, than in the last years before his departure for Italy. But even though he may have been just as obliging as ever, just as amiable, and as interested in doing everything that he could for his friends, the subjective devotion, which alone cements the hearts of friends, was lacking.

This new relation of Goethe to his old friends has been most strikingly portrayed by Schiller, who spent the winter of 1788–1789 in Weimar, without attracting much attention from Goethe. In February, 1789, he wrote to Körner: "Goethe has a talent for fascinating people and for ingratiating himself with them by means of little attentions, as well as greater favours, but he always knows how to hold himself free. He makes his existence felt, by means of his generosity, but only after the manner of a god, without giving himself."[13]

This gives us a key for the correct interpretation of the utterance of Karoline Herder, who, although Goethe, after the departure of her husband on his Italian journey, took a very touching interest in her welfare, and in that of her children, nevertheless said of him: "He refuses absolutely to be any thing to his friends any more . . . he is no longer suited for Weimar." It also explains her remark after a social gathering in Goethe's home, at which he had shown some drawings, "We all felt extremely uncomfortable." On the other hand, we can understand Goethe's complaint that nobody sympathised with him and nobody understood him.

Naturally such changed conditions left their deepest trace on his relation to Frau von Stein. It had ceased to be a love-bond before he left Italy, but it might have continued as a friendship, if a woman who is in love could be expected to accept without further ado a more dispassionate love than she has hitherto enjoyed. If Goethe had been more clearly conscious of his change of feeling, he would have had no occasion to be surprised that Frau

von Stein did not receive him with open arms. But, remarkably enough, while he was singing his friend plaintive songs about what it had cost him to give up Italy, he expected her to embrace him with the fulness of joy. He failed entirely to observe how much of her depression of spirits, and how many of her reproaches, uttered and unuttered, sprang from her ardent love for him. As he was unwilling to allow his already bad humour to be made still worse by her sensitiveness, he involuntarily kept away from her, or avoided meeting her alone. This strange bearing provoked the question in her mind, whether or not the feelings which he cherished toward her might any longer be called even friendship. In his letter of August 31st, in answer to her invitation to visit her in Kochberg, he wrote, as though it were a question of crossing the Alps: "I am so much afraid of heaven and earth that I can hardly come to thee. The weather makes me altogether unhappy, and I feel comfortable nowhere but in my little room; there I have a fire made in my open fireplace, and outside it may rain as much as it will." What was she to think of this? And what of his coming several days later and bringing several people with him? How was she to interpret his enigmatical words in another letter addressed to her at Kochberg: "Enjoy thy solitude! God willing, it will not be long till I, too, have regained my solitude, to forsake it no more." Did not this sound as though he were about to flee to Italy again, never to return? And what of his message to her in Italian, which he sent by her son Fritz: "My virtues are increasing, but my virtue is decreasing"? Six weeks after Goethe's return, when Frau von Stein left Weimar to go to her estate, she complained: "Goethe parted from me as from a perfect stranger."

Accordingly, it is in no sense a question of whether or not she knew of Goethe's union with Christiane Vulpius. The rupture was bound to come; the discovery, which she apparently first made at the beginning of 1789, only hastened it. When, on the 4th of May, she started for Ems to take the baths, she left behind for Goethe a letter, in which

she told him everything that she had treasured up in her heart against him, and at the end gave him the choice of renouncing either her or Christiane. In two letters, containing all sorts of counter-complaints, Goethe explained to her his standpoint, emphasised how much he would value a continuation of her friendship, but refused to comply with her chief request, denying that his relations to Christiane were of a serious character. He seems to have believed that his frank explanations, which had a ring of genuine feeling—the first letter since his return of which as much could be said—would have the desired effect. He deceived himself. She sundered entirely the bond which had already been weakened, and there were few who had any conception of what intense pain this caused her. "To me he is now like a beautiful star that has fallen from my sky." These words, which she had written at the end of March to Lotte von Lengefeld, in anticipation of the inevitable, remained true throughout the rest of her life. Her sorrow over the happiness of which she had been robbed was all the more intense since, in spite of his "faithlessness," she could not cease loving him with all her soul. Nor did it afford her any consolation to say to herself, as she occasionally did, that he had completely degenerated. This did not decrease her love; it only enhanced her sorrow over his fall from the ideal height upon which her esteem had once placed him, and over his spiritual solitariness by the side of Christiane. "I am often so overcome with sorrow for him that I could weep" (May 27, 1791).

Goethe bore the loss more easily, because it must have meant much less to him after the great transformation of his nature. Furthermore, the burden was made lighter for him by his manifold studies, extending over a wide range of subjects, by his passionate devotion to poetry (first of all to *Tasso*), his eventful life, and the pretty maid of the common people whom he had taken to himself. And still he did not pass through the experience without his share of painful wounds. Even though these may have healed quickly, there came moments when the scars

burned. In one such moment, a year after the separation, he wrote the verses:

Eine Liebe hatt' ich, sie war mir lieber als alles!
Aber ich hab' sie nicht mehr! Schweig und ertrag den Verlust! *

In later years we can still feel the fever of his wounds, when, even in the mirror of poetry, he avoids the remembrance of the palmy days of his love for Frau von Stein. And this in spite of the fact that a reconciliation had long since been effected between them. In the nature of the case it was impossible that two such superior, and, with all their human weaknesses, such noble personalities, who knew so thoroughly each other's worth, should have continued to live near each other in hostility. After the lapse of five years the peacemaking influence of the Schillers succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation, which gradually developed into a more or less cordial friendship. There came times when Goethe called to see her every morning, when she visited him almost every week, and they exchanged many other little civilities.

As Frau von Stein, with all her bodily infirmities, lived to a great age, a long and pleasant evening of life shed its mild light upon them both.

"Thou hast but one rival, a colossal head of Juno," Goethe had written from Rome to Frau von Stein in January, 1787. If in the place of the Juno we put the antique, he might have written the same thing to her a year later, only in a much broader and, for her, more threatening sense. "The school of the Greeks closed not its doors. . . . happily live, so may antiquity live within thee." To live happily in the sense of the ancients meant, according to Amor's teachings, to be young and in love. "Be spritely! Mark what I say!" Goethe understood his teacher and obeyed him.[14] He yielded to the enticing charms of youth and woman's beauty. Since from yielding to these charms

* One beloved had I, whom above all else I cherished
Now I have her no more. Silence! Endure thou the loss.!

he felt a comfortable equilibrium between spirit and senses, he was not ashamed of the "cropping out again of his student vein," even in the presence of his old friends at home; he gazed into the eyes of the pretty maidens, kissed their hands, danced with them, and told them a thousand beautiful things. Hence it was only characteristic of this trend of mind that, four weeks after his return, when a beautiful suppliant, whose brown locks hung down upon her white neck, and whose bright, mirthful spirit beamed from her rosy little face, approached him in the park, he should have induced her to come often to see him. In this manner Christiane Vulpius, who had hitherto been employed in making artificial flowers for Bertuch's factory, entered his house and remained there.[15] At first he looked upon the relation as purely artistic, Roman, antique. It afforded him a charming pastime, involving no serious intellectual effort, after the burdens and cares of the day. And even after a year had passed, he wished, as we learn from a letter to Frau von Stein, that it might remain on this basis, "and not degenerate." He begged Frau von Stein to help him with her love to keep it so. As she was unable to comply with such a request, he entered into a conscience marriage with Christiane, looking upon the relation and speaking of it as true marriage. In the course of time, his pleasure in her pretty form and features, and in her unaffected, cheerful, robust nature, his agreeable *habitude*,[16] and, above all else, the birth of his son August (December 25, 1789) created in him a tender affection, which he at times mistook for love; but a real love-passion, dominating his whole life, was utterly out of the question. In order to be convinced of this one need only compare the letters and poems addressed to Christiane with the earlier or later documents of Goethe's love affairs. This assertion is apparently contradicted by the fact that he wrote to Herder from Venice, on the 28th of May, 1790, "I willingly confess that I love the girl passionately"; but his declaration was either due to the over-valuation of a rather strong, momentary feeling of longing, or, what is more probable,

was an emphatic reassertion of his interest in Christiane for the express purpose of commending her and her little son as warmly as possible to the protection of Herder and his wife. He knew only too well how much Christiane needed their protection. All his friends were persecuting her with hatred and contempt. The meanest things were told of her, and Herder's wife was the very person who was religiously circulating the worst gossip about her. Indeed, though public opinion later became more favourable to her, it remained forever low enough to keep Goethe's wife ostracised from Weimar society.

Unfortunately, it must be said, the aversion of Goethe's circle of friends was not wholly without justification. While Christiane's character was certainly excellent, this of itself did not qualify her for social intercourse, which demands approximate equality in education and similarity in habits of life. In these two respects she never rose very far above her original level. This gives an idea of how heavily the relation must at times have weighed upon Goethe,[17] and explains why he hesitated for seventeen years before legitimising his marriage, doing it even then only because of the pressure of extraordinary events, whereas the consciousness that his son August was growing up into young manhood was enough in itself to have urged him to take the step.

It is impossible to read the correspondence between Goethe and Christiane without a feeling of sorrow and sympathy for the great man. No free outpouring of the thousand-fold thoughts and feelings which occupied him as a poet, investigator, and statesman; not a word about his reading; no explanations of the real value of his important personal associations; no exalted reports of his happy poetic inventions,—his letters are filled with nothing but the common, earthly things of everyday life. "As soon as the poem [*Hermann und Dorothea*] is finished, thou shalt have the soap, and something else besides, so that thou mayst rejoice with me in thine own way" (March 10, 1797). Goethe was silent about all higher things, because he knew that the finer emotions of his spirit would call forth no response

in her soul. Frequently Christiane's lack of appreciation for, and responsiveness to, the best things that filled his breast would entirely destroy his mood for work in her immediate presence. Then he would flee for weeks and months to Jena, or some other congenial place, and that too, even after Schiller had settled in Weimar. It is noticeable that, in order to compensate Christiane for his absence, he willingly allows her to live according to her own liking. On the other hand, he is indebted to her for many wholesome, enjoyable comforts, and she adds to his pleasure in life by providing for his physical wants, relieving him of the care of house and garden, kitchen and cellar, and by granting him that liberty for the sake of which he had before avoided all permanent bonds. Thus he continues to live after marriage as before. His heart is free and yields to every inclination. From now on we shall scarcely perceive that we have to do with a married man. To be sure, he purchased this liberty at the price of spiritual poverty in his home, which often weighed heavily upon him, and, because of his son, filled his heart with pain.

Whether this unconquerable desire to enrich his life was the cause, or the result, of his insuperable poetic instinct, is a question hard to decide. Thus much is certain: the writing of poetry in the highest sense means experiencing, loving, enjoying, struggling, suffering, bleeding. Goethe had this in mind in *Tasso*, when he compared the poet to the martyr, and penned the elegiac lines:

Der Lorbeerkranz iſt, wo er dir erſcheint,
Ein Zeichen mehr des Leidens als des Glücks.*

We, who owe the uninterrupted music of Goethe's lyre, covering the whole wide range of poetic composition, to the liberty which he exercised in his manner of life, should not find fault with him when that liberty leads to unfortunate turns; we should understand him, should, above all, comprehend the great will of fate, which decreed that he should rejoice for our delight and suffer for our atonement.

* The laurel wreath, where'er it meets thy gaze,
Betokens sorrow more than happiness.

It was in work that Goethe found the most efficacious remedy for the feeling of dissatisfaction which followed his return from Italy. Of the eight volumes of his collected writings, which had been in process of publication since the beginning of 1787, three still awaited final revision. They were to contain *Tasso*, *Faust*, some minor dramas, and his poems. The volume containing the poems was ready in the autumn of 1788. Here it was mainly a question of collecting and revising what had previously been written. The completion of *Tasso* was a more difficult undertaking, and success did not crown his efforts until the summer of the following year. He gave up the plan of finishing *Faust*, as he had hoped to do in Italy, and had given the public to expect. He satisfied himself with making a few additions to the fragment, as he had brought it with him from Frankfort, and then "drew a line at the end of the piece." In addition to this work for the complete edition of his writings, his thought was further occupied with the elaboration of some of the general chapters of his Italian letters and journals, which he was publishing in Wieland's *Merkur;* among others, the important observations concerning the three grades of artistic creation, "simple imitation of nature, manner, style." One of these selected chapters, the description of the Roman carnival, he published separately, illustrated with etchings representing the chief masks. Finally he took up a scientific task, the presentation of his theory of plant metamorphosis, the essential basis of which he had discovered before he went to Italy, where he became more and more certain of its correctness. In January, 1790, when he had finished this, in his own opinion, unusually important little treatise, and when for the moment his mind was not seriously occupied with any pressing work, either poetic or scientific, there awoke in him with greater power the longing to get away for a time from the disagreeable atmosphere of Weimar, preferably by going back to Italy. The Duchess Amalia had been sojourning there, with Einsiedel and Fräulein von Göchhausen, since the autumn of 1788, and had repeatedly requested him to join her suite.

In September, 1789, he had thought seriously of going to her, but had given up the plan, chiefly, it would seem, out of consideration for his work. He now decided to go, in spite of the fact that the Duchess had already started on her return journey. Christiane and his little son August were unable to hold him back. In the middle of March he left Weimar, and on the last day of the month arrived in Venice, which had been agreed upon as a meeting-place.

What a different impression Italy now made upon him! Whereas four years before his enthusiastic interest in art and nature, the uplifting consciousness of having for ten years fulfilled his duty and sacrificed his strength to the welfare of the Weimar State, and the comforting belief that he possessed at home a rich fund of friendship and love which he could never lose, had glossed over for him every lack of comfort and everything burdensome, and offensive; now earthly things appear to him, who has become a "complete son of earth," in all their glaring light, while memories of home fill his soul with other dissonances. Besides, it was early spring, the valley of the Po was still bare, and in Venice snow fell at frequent intervals. He became convinced that under certain circumstances the Italian spring is extremely like the spring in Weimar. In his first feeling of disappointment he writes to the Duke that his love for Italy has received a mortal blow. To Herder he remarks that he is this time "a little more intolerant toward the beastly life of the nation," and in the *Venezianische Epigramme* he angrily calls the lagoons a frog-pond, and Venice St. Mark in the Mud.* Other shadows, too, which before had not disturbed the beautiful picture for him, now excite his wrath.

Deutſche Redlichkeit ſuchſt du in allen Winkeln vergebens:
Leben und Weben iſt hier, aber nicht Ordnung und Zucht;
Jeder ſorgt nur für ſich, mißtrauet dem andern, iſt eitel,
Und die Meiſter des Staats ſorgen nur wieder für ſich.

. . . . . .

Das iſt Italien nicht mehr, das ich mit Schmerzen verließ. †

* Suggested by S. Giovanni in Bragora.—C.

† German honesty findest thou nowhere in all this city!

It was a bitter experience through which he passed, but it turned out to be a blessing for him and for us. It won him back for Germany forever.

In all other respects Venice was too beautiful and too agreeable for dissatisfaction to become his prevailing mood. As his sojourn was prolonged to almost eight weeks, owing to the late arrival of the Duchess, he had ample time for the cultivation of his varied interests. Again it was art especially that absorbed his attention. One of the first things he went to see was Palladio's Carità, and he expatiated on its beauty to his servant.* Again the antique claimed its due meed of attention, but his chief study was painting, which he had more or less neglected on his previous journey. Titian, whom he considers "the peerless," Paolo Veronese, and Tintoretto come into the foreground. But he also pays attention to the older masters up to the Byzantine period, and they elicit from him some fine observations concerning the development of the Venetian school of painting. He distinguishes four epochs: "Works of dry monkish bigotry; works of pure human piety; works of healthy, quickened senses, and joyous, vigorous manhood; and works of representation, often with meaningless splendour, albeit with much art and technical skill." This characterisation of the Venetian school may be applied to Italian painting in general, and it would be difficult to find anything better. Technique he sought to master in various ways, especially by contemplating the work of the restorers. On his way to the restorers, who had established their atelier in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, he was obliged to pass Verrocchio's equestrian statue of Colleoni, but, as on the occasion of his former sojourn, he had not a word to say of

> Business and life here abound, order and culture are rare;
> Each man cares for himself, is vain and of others suspicious,
> Even the chiefs of the state care for none else than themselves.
> . . . . . .
> No more the Italy, this, which I lamented to leave.

* It will be remembered that the idealistic traveller of 1786 was happy not to have any servant or guide with him. *Cf.* vol. i., 370.

this great creation. Christian plastic art remained dead, so far as he was concerned.

On the Litorale di Lido he occupied himself with the study of natural science. One day, while he was absorbed in the observation of marine fauna and strand flora, his servant brought him a broken sheep's skull that he had found in the Jewish cemetery, and this gave him a significant insight into a particular metamorphosis of the animal body. The find convinced him that all the bones of the skull were the result of specialisation of certain vertebræ, thus verifying what he had hitherto surmised concerning the progression of inwardly unformed organic masses to more and more noble forms of being.

"Some day the little book of epigrams* must give further account of my industry and indolence in other matters; also of my adventures, whims, and the like" (to Karoline Herder, May 4th). It does. Its general character, more vigorous, but less noble, than the *Römische Elegien*, informs us that the pious pilgrim of the former journey has meanwhile transformed himself into a sensuous child of the world, who does not despise even the pleasures of the darkest cafés.

On the 6th of May the Duchess arrived in Venice, and gave Goethe a most agreeable surprise by bringing with her two of his Roman friends, Heinrich Meyer and Bury. Goethe took them to see the noteworthy sights of Venice, and then accompanied them to Padua, Vicenza, Verona, and Mantua. This time Goethe's diary makes special mention of the church, Madonna dell' Arena, in Padua, but with the dry comment, "Old paintings, the upper row probably by Mantegna." Evidently the conjecture that these works were by Mantegna interested him much more than the fact that the greater portion of the frescos were by Giotto.

On the 1st of June he left Italy with the Duchess, while Bury remained in Mantua. On the 18th he was again in Weimar.

* *Venezianische Epigramme.*

When Goethe sang in Venice:

Weit und ſchön iſt die Welt, doch o! wie dank' ich dem Himmel,
Daß ein Gärtchen, beſchränkt, zierlich, mir eigen gehört.
Bringet mich wieder nach Hauſe! Was hat ein Gärtner zu reiſen?
Ehre bringt's ihm und Glück, wenn er ſein Gärtchen beſorgt—*

and:

Im Norden
Zieht ein großer Magnet unwiderſtehlich zurück—†

he was thoroughly mistaken with regard to himself. Although he had been gone more than three months, the magnet was hardly able to hold him five weeks, so eager was he again to desert his little garden and go out into the beautiful, wide world. It was an invitation from the Duke that enticed him away. While Goethe had been in Italy the Duke had yielded to his military inclinations, and had, to the great vexation of his mentor, entered the Prussian army as a major-general. As such he went in the spring to Silesia, where Prussia had amassed troops in order to force Austria to desist from further conquests in Turkey. But, thanks to the moderation and diplomacy of Leopold II. who had joined his brother Joseph in February, warlike complications were very soon avoided.

Goethe had been known to decline more urgent invitations from the Duke on more important occasions, and he might very easily have declined this one, as in reality he had been summoned to the Duke's side only because of a casual remark he himself had made. But the attachment for home, of which he had spoken in Venice, had already taken flight, and it was with great pleasure that he escaped from the uncongenial atmosphere of Weimar. Indeed, he was already planning a further journey with the Duke to Frankfort to attend the coronation. When he arrived in

* Wide and fair is the world, but, oh! how grateful to Heaven
I, for the garden I own, little, yet charming and neat!
Carry me back to my home! What need hath a gardener to wander?
Honoured and happy he'll be, if to his garden he looks.

† A magnet
Greater in force than my will draweth me back to the north.

Silesia peace was already assured by the treaty of Reichenbach, which had been signed on the 27th of July. Hence he was able to devote himself almost without interruption to the study of the country, which he found "tenfold interesting." Immediately upon his arrival he had visited the busy spinning-mills and weaving-mills in the towns among the foothills of the Riesengebirge and the Eulengebirge. Thence he proceeded with the Duke's brigade, which had been encamped between Freiburg and Schweidnitz, to Breslau, where he witnessed some brilliant scenes, thanks to the presence of the King, the nobility, and many high military and civil dignitaries. During a high court held by the King, von Schuckmann, superior judge of the barmote, later Prussian minister of the interior, was attracted by a distinguished face peering out of the bright-coloured coat of one of the subalterns. It was Goethe. Of all the many persons with whom Goethe here became acquainted he felt most drawn to von Schuckmann, who, like himself, was a strange combination of esthetic and practical interests.

Von Schuckmann has given such a discriminating account of the impressions which he received of the poet during his sojourn in Breslau that we may quote his judgments here for our enlightenment. To Capellmeister Reichardt of Berlin, his and Goethe's common friend, he wrote: "That it is hard to get very close to him [Goethe] is not the fault of his will, but of his idiosyncrasy, and the difficulty of expressing in words his feelings and ideas exactly as they exist in his soul; it is also the fault of the intention of both [his feelings and ideas], and of the love which this forces him to feel for them. Until he knows that one divines and feels his meaning, and sees into his soul through every opening that he gives, he cannot speak." In a later letter: "I have become very closely and intimately acquainted with him, and have found him to be a superior man. His difficulty in expressing himself, of which I wrote you, was entirely gone the moment he became cordial and cast aside conventionalities in his intercourse with me. When he feels indifferent he really cannot speak,

and yet with strangers he seeks to force himself to, and that, doubtless, for good reasons. In a congenial mood he follows his natural bent, and from his rich treasure throws out whole masses of ideas. I might say that he speaks, as the algebraist calculates, not with numbers, but with quantities, and his vivid presentation is never the jugglery of fancy; his pictures are always the true companion pieces that nature has given to real being, to which—not away from it—they lead the hearer. This is now, a week after his departure, my settled opinion concerning his personality and this opinion is in no wise influenced by the attachment which I have formed for him. To be sure, everybody else here, from Garve [18] to Seydlitz, finds that he expresses himself strangely, that he is not to be understood, and that he makes unbearable pretentions; and yet he showed a very cordial interest in my good mother-in-law's stories about the phenomenal accomplishments of her grandson, and about her household affairs, and it has made her very fond of him."

In this characterisation by a contemporary we have a valuable proof of how much Goethe's spirit had been broadened in Italy, how greatly the difficulty had increased of introducing another into his intellectual world, and how, on short acquaintance, or when he was approached with too small a measure of understanding or of devoted attention, he preferred to confine his conversation to conventionalities, or to short, half-obscure suggestions, and how in this way he gave the impression of being cold, vain, and pompous. This impression was of necessity deepened, the more his inherited dignity of bearing, for which he had been noted, even as a boy, asserted itself with the lapse of years.

For sixteen days, from the 10th to the 26th of August, Goethe tarried in Breslau, which as a city pleased him very little. In the midst of the great turmoil he followed out the thoughts which had occured to him in Venice concerning the development of the animal structure, and began to put them in writing. As he did not wish to leave Silesia without having seen all the remarkable sights of the country, he set

out on the 26th on a journey to the County of Glatz. Not satisfied with viewing this region alone, he went from the sandstone labyrinths of the Heuscheuer to the similar formations in Bohemia, the Weckelsdorfer Felsenstadt and the Adersbacher Felsen, and returned thence via Landshut to Breslau.

Hardly had he arrived there, when, in company with the Duke and his highly esteemed friend Count Reden, director of the Silesian mines, he set out again, on the 2nd of September, to visit the mines and smelting-works of Upper Silesia. He examined everything with the closest attention in order to gain as much information as possible for the operation of the small mines at home. In Tarnowitz he found consolation in the fact that the operators, who had a great deal more water to contend with than there was in Ilmenau, yet hoped to control it successfully. Interest in mining took the travellers on to Wieliczka in Galicia. On the way they visited Cracow, the ancient city in which Polish kings were formerly crowned. They also considered it worth while to return by a somewhat roundabout way in order to pass through the famous Polish city of Czenstochau, the objective point of many pilgrimages. On the 10th of September the company returned to Breslau.

On this journey Goethe had for the first time entered Slavic territory, thereby rounding out his knowledge of the chief civilised races of Europe. Unfortunately he did not at that time, nor later, speak at length of the observations he had made on this tour. Within six months he had travelled in Romanic, Germanic, and Slavic countries, and he certainly formed clear conceptions of their characteristic distinctions. If we understand aright his remark concerning the journey through Upper Silesia and Poland, viz., "In the course of this week I have seen many remarkable things, even if they be for the most part only negatively remarkable," the thing that above all else attracted his attention was the lack of culture, the ignorance, the stupidity, and the low mode of life of the inhabitants, and all that these imply. Such is the import of the beginning of

the Tarnowitz album verse, "Far from human culture," at which the Upper Silesians were very much offended.

Being in no hurry to return to Weimar, Goethe made another sojourn of nine days in Breslau, and then returned leisurely to Saxony, by the same general route he had taken on the outward journey, but going somewhat farther back into the mountains. He climbed the crumbling granite cone of the Schneekoppe, and seems to have walked along the crest of the Riesengebirge and the Isergebirge, descending into the valley at Friedeberg. In about a week he arrived in "beloved Dresden," where he again spent eight days, in spite of the fact that he had made a sojourn there on his way to join the Duke. Social intercourse, the rich art treasures, and a collection of animal skeletons, prevented his earlier departure. He spent most of his time in the home of Superior Judge Körner, who five years before had become the husband of his young Leipsic friend Minna Stock. This noble, finely educated man won his esteem, as he had Schiller's some time before. If he found Goethe cold, at first, he was soon convinced how cordial the poet could become as soon as he came in contact with a congenial spirit. This close association with Körner foreshadowed Goethe's later friendlier relations with Schiller. Not until about the 6th of October do we find Goethe back in Weimar. He had given up the journey to Frankfort, because the Duke could not get away from Silesia in time to attend the coronation (September 30th).

It is characteristic that the following year Goethe again desired to spend much of his time away from Weimar. "I shall be at home little during the summer," he wrote in March to Heinrich Meyer. But unexpectedly there arose two new tasks for him which detained him. One was the establishment of the Ducal Court Theatre.

In March, 1783, the Amateur Theatre, which had afforded entertainment for the Court and the good society of Weimar, ceased to exist, upon Goethe's tiring of the function of "grand-master of the apes." It was superseded in January, 1784, by Bellomo's troupe, with whose perform-

ances the Court gradually became more and more dissatisfied. Accordingly, at the beginning of 1791, when Bellomo received a call to Gratz, Styria, the Duke gladly cancelled the contract with him, and decided to erect a theatre of his own, for which he had the enthusiastic support of his mother, who had learned in Italy doubly to appreciate a good stage. It was natural that no one but Goethe should be thought of for the directorship. His official burdens were very light, and, besides, he had the prospect of finding in Privy Councillor Kirms a clever assistant and, in case of necessity, a substitute. So he did not oppose the Duke's wish. He had reason to hope that through the direction of a permanent stage he might promote the dramatic art of Germany in general, and that, with his deeper insight, he might be stimulated to renewed dramatic creation. Accordingly he undertook the office of "director in chief" of the theatre, a post which he held for twenty-six years.

What he accomplished in this position deserves the highest admiration. He had at his disposal only a small, poorly trained troupe of twenty-two players. With these he had to satisfy the most varied demands. It was expected and necessary that every kind of dramatic composition be fostered: farce, comedy, tragedy, grand opera, comic opera, and, if possible, some ballet-dancing besides. At the same time the stage properties were very meagre, and the lack of a "white satin" dress was enough to make the performance of a certain piece a very serious question. The répertoire had not only to be many-sided, it had also to be changed frequently to please the limited audience. Nevertheless the actors and singers were expected to have learned their parts well, to play well, and sing well. This would have been possible if there had been none but talented players and singers in the troupe. But how could one hope to obtain or keep prominent actors and singers at a salary of from five to eight thalers a week?[19] Hence it was always more an accident than anything else when a really talented person was to be found among them. Further, there was for Goethe the special difficulty of harmonising his con-

siderations for the dignity of art, and his artistic aims, with the limitations of the funds. And yet he overcame all difficulties with unparalleled perseverance and patience, and elevated the stage step by step, till in comedy it equalled the first stages in Germany,[20] until, indeed, it was the only stage which possessed a style for the serious verse-drama that seemed to Goethe and Schiller, and many of their best contemporaries, most fitting for this high artistic form. The controlling idea of the Weimar style, which seeks to combine true-to-nature characterisation and idealising beauty of form (in the sense of Greek plasticity), will have to be the future standard for the higher drama in verse, however much may be said in favour of greater naturalness in the other dramatic categories. Whoever condemns the Weimar style in itself must also banish the iambic pentameter from the stage.

Goethe could not carry on any business without allowing his human sympathy to share in it. At times this alleviated the burden of his calling, and at times it added to it. In his direction of the theatre it served him as a great alleviation and an important help. Without a purely human interest in every actor, he could not have taken such a lively interest in his individuality, could not have made of this individuality the best of which it was capable, could not have inspired the individual with such devotion to him and to the work of the troupe as a whole. Then again, when he saw progress in the development of an actor whom he had undertaken to instruct, he felt a profound joy, which carried him over a thousand unpleasantnesses. Naturally, he took a special pleasure in those personalities in whom he discovered native talent, and a still greater in those who combined with their talent spiritual and physical charms. It need hardly be said that for him this superior combination of qualifications existed only in those members of the troupe who were of the gentler sex. His interest in them arose at times to passion, and he had to be on his guard not to allow his passion to run away with him. He was called upon to display great moral firmness, for many a talented and charm-

ing actress met him half-way. Late in life he remarked in this connection: "I collected myself and said 'No further!' I recognised my position, and knew what I owed to it. Here my situation was not that of a man in private life, but of the head of an institution, the success of which meant more to me than my momentary happiness. If I had entered into any love affair at all, I should have become as a compass, which cannot possibly point correctly when it has an influencing magnet at its side."

Upon his assumption of the directorship he was immediately led into one strong temptation of this sort. Among the five members whom the Weimar Court Theatre retained from Bellomo's troupe was Christiane Neumann, scarcely thirteen years old, but mature far beyond her years, an unusually talented and charming girl, who had been a favourite with the public ever since her first appearance upon the stage, at the age of ten. Goethe took it upon himself to prepare her for the highest performances, and his efforts were crowned with glorious success. Unfortunately this early blossom withered quickly. Married at the age of fifteen, she died in September, 1797, before she had reached the age of nineteen. Upon her grave Goethe placed as an unfading wreath of laurel the elegy *Euphrosyne*. In this elegy he has her describe how he, as her "teacher, friend, and father," taught her her first important rôle, that of Arthur in Shakespeare's *King John* (performed on the 29th of November, 1791).

Denkſt du der Stunde noch wohl, wie, auf dem Brettergerüſte,
Du mich der höheren Kunſt ernſtere Stufen geführt?
Knabe ſchien ich, ein rührendes Kind, du nannteſt mich Arthur,
Und belebteſt in mir britiſches Dichtergebild',
Drohteſt mit grimmiger Glut den armen Augen, und wandteſt
Selbſt den Tränenden Blick, innig getäuſchet, hinweg.
Ach! da warſt du ſo hold und ſchützteſt ein trauriges Leben,
Das die verwegene Flucht endlich dem Knaben entriß.
Freundlich faßteſt du mich, den Zerſchmetterten, trugſt mich von dannen,
Und ich heuchelte lang, dir an dem Buſen, den Tod.
Endlich ſchlug die Augen ich auf, und ſah dich, in ernſte,

Stille Betrachtung verſenkt, über den Liebling geneigt.
Kindlich ſtrebt' ich empor, und küßte die Hände dir dankbar,
Reichte zum reinen Kuß dir den gefälligen Mund.
Fragte: warum, mein Vater, ſo ernſt? und hab' ich gefehlet,
O! ſo zeige mir an, wie mir das Beſſ're gelingt.
Keine Mühe verdrießt mich bei dir, und alles und jedes
Wiederhol' ich ſo gern, wenn du mich leiteſt und lehrſt.
Aber du faßteſt mich ſtark und drückteſt mich feſter im Arme,
Und es ſchauderte mir tief in dem Buſen das Herz.
Nein! mein liebliches Kind, ſo riefſt du, alles und jedes,
Wie du es heute gezeigt, zeig' es auch morgen der Stadt.
Rühre ſie alle, wie mich du gerührt, und es fließen zum Beifall
Dir von dem trockenſten Aug' herrliche Tränen herab.
Aber am tiefſten trafſt du doch mich, den Freund, der im Arm dich
Hält, den ſelber der Schein früherer Leiche geſchreckt.

. . . . . .

Aber freudig ſeh ich dich mir, in dem Glanze der Jugend,
Vielgeliebtes Geſchöpf, wieder am Herzen belebt.
Springe fröhlich dahin, verſtellter Knabe! Das Mädchen
Wächſt zur Freude der Welt, mir zum Entzücken heran.
Immer ſtrebe ſo fort und deine natürlichen Gaben
Bilde, bei jeglichem Schritt ſteigenden Lebens, die Kunſt.
Sei mir lange zur Luſt, und eh' mein Auge ſich ſchließet,
Wünſch' ich dein ſchönes Talent glücklich vollendet zu ſehn.—
Alſo ſprachſt du, und nie vergaß ich der wichtigen Stunde!
Deutend entwickelt' ich mich an dem erhabenen Wort.
O wie ſprach ich ſo gerne zum Volk die rührenden Reden,
Die du, voller Gehalt, kindlichen Lippen vertraut!
O wie bildet' ich mich an deinen Augen, und ſuchte
Dich im tiefen Gedräng' ſtaunender Hörer heraus! *

* Canst thou the hour still recall, when thou on the stage at rehearsal
Taughtst me of tragical art all the more serious steps?
I was a boy, and an innocent child, thou calledst me Arthur,
And in me didst fulfill Shakespeare's poetical dream,
Threaten'dst with red-glowing irons to burn out my sight, then turnedst,
Deeply affected, away, hiding thy tear-streaming eyes.
Ah! thy heart was so tender, thou sparedst the life full of sorrow,
Which an adventurous leap finally brought to a close.
Tenderly lifting my shattered form, from thence thou didst bear me;
Folded so close to thy breast, long did I feign I was dead.
When I my eyes at length opened, I saw thee tenderly gazing,
Earnest and still and sad, over thy favourite bowed.

Though much of this description of the relation between the director of the theatre and the actors may not apply to other members of the troupe, nevertheless enough of it does apply to explain the secret of Goethe's success, in spite of the players' inferior talents and the scanty supply of stage furnishings. It also explains his perseverance in the difficult and often very ungrateful office through more than a quarter of a century.

The theatre was opened on the 7th of May with Iffland's *Die Jäger*, and a prologue by Goethe, in which he declared his first and chief aim to be to produce an ensemble in which

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Childlike I raised up my head, and, thy hands in gratitude kissing,
Offered thee as reward innocent kiss on my lips;
Questioned thee: "Wherefore, my father, so serious? If 't was a [failure
Oh! then show me, I pray, how I may better succeed.
Nought that for thee I attempt doth annoy me, every least detail
Oft will I gladly repeat, taught and guided by thee."
Thou didst clasp me with might and caress me with passionate [fondness,
But my heart at the thought shuddered deep in my breast.
"No, my lovely one," thou didst exclaim; "in every least detail
Play for the folk on the morn just as to-day thou hast played.
Touch their emotions as mine thou hast touched, and, applauding thy [playing,
Glorious tears shall run down e'en from the dryest of eyes.
But 't is thy friend, who embraceth thee, thou hast most deeply [affected;
Likeness of premature death causing him deepest dismay.
. . . . . .
But I rejoice to behold thee, thou maiden so dearly belovèd,
Once more alive in my arms, still in the splendour of youth.
Spring away happy in boyish disguise. The maiden is growing
Into a joy to the world, source of delight unto me.
Evermore strive to improve; let art be thy constant adviser,
Shaping thy natural gifts in every step of thy rise.
Long may thy progress delight me, and may thy beautiful talent
Reach perfection's proud state ere yet my eyelids be closed."
Thus thou spakest, and ne'er forgot I the grave admonition.
Conning thy counsel sublime, ever I grew by its light.
Oh, how gladly I uttered in public that burden of pathos,
Lines full of meaning, which thou trustedst to lips of a child!
Oh, how thy glance did instruct me! and oh, how I searched through [my hearers,
Hoping thy face to descry there in the wondering throng!

the individual does not strive to "snatch a crown for himself," but to subordinate himself to the whole. After a month, during which, on account of the short time for preparation, only plays from Bellomo's répertoire could be given, the season was closed, in order that the troupe might go to the then very popular watering-place Lauchstädt, near Merseburg, and thence to Erfurt. From that time on the Weimar Company always went on a tour during the summer, in order to replenish their treasury and to lighten the burden of the répertoire for the actors, who enjoyed no other vacation. As a rule the performances were not resumed in Weimar before the month of October. Such was the case in 1791. Accordingly, Goethe would have had time to carry out his plans for travel, of which he had dropped a hint in March. But another undertaking had so greatly interested him that he did not care to leave Weimar until it should have been provisionally achieved.

He was engaged in a series of studies looking toward the establishment of a new theory of light and colour. In his earlier life nature and art had attracted his attention to the phenomena of light and to the origin and mutual relationship of colours. In Italy the brilliant creations in the field of painting, his observations in the studios of his artist friends, together with his own exercises in art, and, above all, the wonderful play of colours in the southern landscape, had given a new and powerful impulse to this interest, and in the midst of his multifarious occupatious he found time to indulge in all sorts of "speculations" concerning colours. His interest, once aroused, urged him after his return home to continue his speculations by means of experiments, and in the course of time he arrived, not only at the conviction that the hitherto generally accepted Newtonian theory of light was wrong, but also, in May, 1791, at a new, and, as he thought, more correct theory. As yet he did not feel well enough prepared to make an immediate announcement to the world of his own theory; but the public must not suffer under Newton's errors a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. So he set to work at once to show,

in his *Beiträge zur Optik*, by a description of a series of experiments which he himself had performed, what he considered untenable in Newton's principles. In twenty-seven plates, which he took great pains in drawing and manifolding, he supplied the necessary means of illustrating his experiments. This first part of his optical contributions, which appeared in October, 1791, was followed by a short second part the next Easter.

Even in this scientific paper the poet is apparent. Instead of proceeding at once, as the technical writer would, with the explanation of the physical basis of his experiments, he begins with an exposition, in elevated language, of the esthetic charm of colours. He describes the grateful impression of the green meadows and forests, which is further enhanced when nature puts on the more decided colours of her wedding garment, and adorns herself with flowers. But far superior to these spectacles, which nature offers us of the north, is the glorious colour-symphony which the Italian landscape affords. To one who has lived there for a time the remembrance of it is like a scene in fairyland. Goethe now proceeds with enthusiastic delight and consummate art to paint a glowing picture of the colour-magic of the south, closing with the characteristic words: "I draw a curtain before this picture, lest it disturb us in the calm contemplation in which we now propose to engage."

The *Beiträge* were very unfavourably received by the scientific world. Instead of seeing in them the overthrow of Newton's theory, scholars were inclined to look upon them merely as an evidence of the author's faulty method and reasoning. But far from allowing himself to be frowned down by this opposition of specialists, which he considered a manifestation of the egotistical self-satisfaction and narrow-mindedness of the learned "guild," Goethe was, on the contrary, led by it to more profound studies and more comprehensive experiments, which made him feel more and more certain of his views. He later laid down his results in his great *Farbenlehre*.

Thus the year 1791 had opened for him two new and

very different fields of activity: the direction of the theatre, and research in optics. It is difficult to say which of the two occupied more of his time, or interested him more deeply.

What ten years before he had so ardently wished for had been realised. Remote from the strife of political factions, he was permitted to turn his mind to science and art. This peaceful existence was not, however, of long duration, and he was unexpectedly caught in the maelstrom of the great events of the day.

IV

ON THE FIELD OF WAR

Breaking out of the French revolution—Goethe's attitude toward it—Germany embroiled in the war—Goethe to accompany the Duke to the field and to visit his mother on the way—Why he had not visited her for thirteen years—His reasons for remaining at Weimar, and for avoiding his native city—His apparent egoism and his real love—His mother's understanding of him—His visit in Frankfort—With the army at Longwy—His standing with officers and soldiers—His conduct in camp—Optical studies in the field—Battle of Valmy—Goethe's fearlessness—His idea of the significance of the battle—Retreat of the Prussians—Goethe ill, withdraws from the army—Starts home via Treves and Coblenz—Side journey to Düsseldorf—Old and new friends there—Visit to Princess Gallitzin in Münster—Return to Weimar—New horrors of the revolution—*Reineke Fuchs*—Goethe called to join the Duke at the siege of Mainz—Visits his mother—Taking of Mainz—Goethe quells a mob—Return home—French victories—Spread of revolutionary ideas.

THE absolute monarchy of France, the most brilliant that the modern world had seen, had become bankrupt and had stretched out its hands for help to the States-General, whose authority it had most contemptuously disregarded for the last hundred and seventy-five years. On the 5th of May, 1789, the States-General assembled in Versailles; but in a few weeks the two upper estates, the nobility and the clergy, were thrust aside, together with the appeal from the crown to replenish the treasury. The representatives of the *tiers état*, taking matters into their own hands, declared themselves the National Assembly, and set themselves the task of giving the country a new constitution. This peaceable revolutionary act was soon followed by one of violence. The people of Paris took up arms, and, on the 14th of July, stormed the old stronghold of the city, the hated

state's prison, the Bastille. The King felt his power lamed and did not dare make use of the authority still vested in him. The way was now open for the revolution. All class privileges were extinguished, and a new state was erected upon the foundation of political equality. On the 14th of July, 1790, the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, the King, in the midst of a magnificent festal gathering on the Champs de Mars, swore allegiance to the principles of the new constitution. It was an occasion of general rejoicing, and tears stood in the eyes of all. A new era of reconciliation, harmony, fraternity, liberty, and manly dignity seemed to have dawned, not only for France, but for all Europe, and the whole world.

Schauten nicht alle Völker in jenen drängenden Tagen
Nach der Hauptſtadt der Welt, die es ſchon ſo lange geweſen
Und jetzt mehr als je den herrlichen Namen verdiente? . . .
Wuchs nicht jeglichem Menſchen der Mut und der Geiſt und die Sprache?
. . . Wer leugnet es wohl, daß hoch ſich das Herz ihm erhoben,
Ihm die freiere Bruſt mit reineren Pulſen geſchlagen,
Als ſich der erſte Glanz der neuen Sonne heranhob?*

It was with such words that Goethe a few years later recalled those memorable days. A thrill of inspiration electrified all who led the higher intellectual life. The rosy dawn diffused over the sky of France was for her neighbours also a sign of promise that happier and more glorious times were approaching. Such was the feeling in Weimar, and Knebel considered it fitting to enlighten the ducal house on the significance of the revolution. Goethe alone was unable to share the general enthusiasm. To be sure, he recognised in the whole development, which he had early foreseen, a just punishment for the sins of royalty and the privileged estates, but he did not see how out of the revolutionary acts

* Did not the nations all, in those days of anxious excitement,
Look tow'rd the city which long the world its capital counted,
And which now more than ever deserved the glorious title? . . .
Felt not every man new courage, new spirit, new language? . . .
. . . Who would deny that his heart had been greatly uplifted,
And that his free-breathing bosom had throbbed with clearer pulsations,
When o'er the world first arose the new-born sun in its splendour?

anything good or salutary could come. All the fine articles of the constitution and the celebrations of harmony were as nothing, when it came to quieting his fears and consoling him. He knew human nature and how hard it is for man to discipline himself. He also knew that human nature does not change in a night.

Quickly indeed came the reaction. The terrorism of the Jacobins, the September massacres of 1792, the execution of the King and Queen, the bloody anarchy, in which the revolution consumed its own progeny, corroborated his secret fears. The revolution had not yet reached the stage of greatest terror when Goethe was compelled to look upon it as no longer an obnoxious spectacle, but a decree of fate, which frightened him out of the peaceful realm of poetry and science, and drove him forth into the restless world.

The German princes could not well stand off and behold indifferently the events taking place in France. Dynastic, political, and material interests combined forced them to make protests, demands, and threats. On the other hand, the National Assembly of France perceived in the warlike preparations of the German powers, especially of Austria, and in those of the French emigrants on German soil, such a danger to the security of France that, after their request that all hostile measures be discontinued was refused, they decided to anticipate the enemy, and so, on the 20th of April, 1792, declared war on Austria.[21] This was equivalent to a declaration of war against Prussia, which had formed an alliance with the German Empire for such contingencies.

Again it became necessary for the Duke of Weimar to march to the front with his Prussian regiment of cuirassiers. It seems very soon to have been settled that Goethe was again to follow his princely friend to the scene of war, though nothing was farther from his own thoughts at the time. He was working with renewed zeal at a continuation of his *Beiträge zur Optik*, and "the nature of light and colour was consuming all his power of thought." But he thought it would not do to oppose the wish of his kind lord. Furthermore he hoped to be recompensed for the interruption of

his quiet pursuit by an unusually important experience, and by a widening of his conception of the world; he hoped to make his way into the heart of a highly cultured country of which he had hitherto known only the border, to view at close range the hotbed of the revolution, to take part in battles and sieges, to get an insight into the tactics of military commanders and diplomats, and to witness the events which were to decide the destiny of all Europe. For the purpose of completing his wonderful range of experiences in life it was necessary for him, a born lover of peace, to march with an army to the field of war.

As the Prussian troops rendezvoused slowly on the Rhine, and advanced still more slowly toward the enemy, Goethe did not set out from Weimar till the 8th of August, and hoped still to reach the Duke before the opening of hostilities. He went first to Frankfort to pay a visit to his mother.

This brings us to the darkest spot on Goethe's life. Almost thirteen years had gone by since he had last seen his mother. During this time he had journeyed as far as Wieliczka and Palermo, had twice been in Venice, but had found no time to visit her. Not even his father's death, in 1782, had made it seem to him his imperative duty to visit her, though she was now left quite alone. At the end of 1784 the Duke, who was sojourning in South Germany, invited him to come as far as Frankfort to meet him. He declined the invitation. On his way home from Italy it seemed so convenient and natural to visit his mother en route. He had already written her from Rome, promising faithfully to come to see her, had even sent her his books and drawings, but he suddenly withdrew the promise. Why? It was immaterial whether he returned to Weimar a few days earlier or later. Indeed, the Duke had left it for him to decide whether or not he would remain a few months longer in Italy. He returned to Weimar via the Splügen Pass and the Lake of Constance, and had time to devote a few days to Frau Schulthess in Constance. Thence he might just as well have returned to Weimar via Stuttgart and Frankfort as via Augsburg and Nuremberg. He knew, too, how

eagerly his mother's heart was longing for him, and yet neither now nor at any time during the next four years did he resolve to do what duty and propriety surely bade him do, even if his heart did not. Shall we believe that his love for his mother had grown cold, and that he suited the fulfilment of his duties to his own convenience? Was he really the egoist that he has been represented to be by many of his contemporaries, and still more generally by later generations? We, who have a deeper insight than our predecessors into his soul-life, shall not give our sanction to these reports; we shall seek, rather, with the one most nearly concerned, who never administered to him the slightest reproof on account of it, to gain an understanding of his enigmatical conduct.

Let us not forget that we are dealing with an unusually passionate nature, which was obliged at times to yield unconditionally to its inclinations, and at other times to resist them, if his life was not to be unnecessarily miserable. Both things, self-indulgence and self-discipline, may have risen as a demonic wall of separation between him and his mother. Before 1786, beside his office, it was, as he himself confesses, his passion for Frau von Stein which kept him away from Frankfort. On his way home from Italy it may have been his fear that his relations with Weimar might be dissolved. His return thither was in many respects very difficult for him. His retirement from office, honourable as the Duke made it for him, and much as it satisfied his longing for the leisure to carry out his literary and scientific projects, must, on the other hand, have aroused in him many apprehensions relative to the future. He no longer had any authority or any regular duties; the people who had bowed before him when he was clothed with power might in the future pass him by without consideration, and might change in a way displeasing to him the measures regulated or introduced in accordance with his particular plans and views. Any man retiring from office is likely for the above reasons to prefer to change his place of residence. On the other hand, he had reason to suspect that, because of the

Duke's special fondness for him and confidence in him, he would again become entangled in affairs which would consume his leisure hours in spite of all he could do, and that as he was no longer clothed with authority his new position would have double the vexation and double the difficulty of his old one. And, indeed, such was to a certain degree the case. At the same time he must have feared that it would continue to be said of him, as it had been repeatedly while he was in Italy, that he was doing nothing in return for the large salary he received. Furthermore, he can hardly have had any doubt but that his relation to Frau von Stein, whether it resumed its former ardour or took on a cooler aspect, would of necessity be the source of many annoyances. Finally, we must not forget his aversion to the severe climate, to the provincial airs and graces, and the quiet, lazy life of Weimar.

While Goethe, about to depart from Italy, was revolving in his mind these considerations, which gave him a foretaste of the "bitterness of death," how enticing must have been the thought of changing his residence to Frankfort! And how much that city had to offer him! Chief among the attractions were: freedom from the oppressiveness of the Weimar atmosphere, a large, beautiful home with rich collections, a live commercial centre, and a fertile region with a mild climate. "How pleased I am that Fritz has seen a river with boats, and trees that bend to the ground beneath their burden of fruit!" This reference to a visit which Fritz von Stein paid to Frankfort in 1785 gives us a glimpse of Goethe's own inner longing. And how greatly he would have rejoiced his lonely mother by moving back to his old home!

After calm consideration he must have realised, on the other hand, what a momentous mistake he would be making, what incalculable advantages he would be sacrificing, in turning his back on Weimar. Could he, with his passionate nature, and his tender-heartedness, be sure that, in the presence of his mother, and surrounded by a hundred flattering influences, he would not yield to the fatal

temptation? Even as late as 1792, when all the conditions were incomparably more favourable in Weimar, such a thing was considered by no means out of the range of possibility.

Now if we bear in mind this mental state in which the poet found himself, we shall be inclined to consider his avoidance of his native city, his actual fleeing from the west, during this and the following few years, when he travelled about so much, not only comprehensible, but also justifiable. To be sure, one who has seen only the surface, the bare fact, must accuse him of loveless egoism. The more he allowed even his closest associates to see only the surface of his life, and the more, with his advancing years, the resiliency of youth, which enables one to recover from hard blows, failed him, and the more he was compelled, for the sake of self-preservation, to disregard the considerations to which other people are accustomed, the more frequently this reproach was heard. As though Goethe had saved himself for himself alone, and not for the world! As though he would not have done the world a greater wrong, if, out of consideration for others, he had stood in the way of his own greatest usefulness!

He gradually came to know that he meant something to the world. Every exceptionally gifted man who rules his actions in accordance with the fulfilment of a mission takes on the appearance of egoism, because he refuses to allow his time to be taken up with anything that is likely to prove a hindrance to this mission. But this egoistic genius is ready without hesitation to sacrifice himself for others, when he believes that his mission demands it. Such was Goethe, as we have learned to know him during his years as a minister, and in later years he never changed. "His heart cherishes the purest, warmest love," said Varnhagen, an acute observer of men, years afterward. "He was love itself," said the plain, simple Councillor of Mines Mahr of Ilmenau. And such was, without question, the opinion of his mother. Surely those words of her seventeen-year-old son rang continually in her ears:

. . . So wenig als der Fels,
Der tief im Fluß, vor ew'gem Anker liegt,
Aus seiner Stätte weicht . . .
So wenig weicht die Zärtlichkeit für dich
Aus meiner Bruſt, obgleich des Lebens Strom,
Vom Schmerz gepeitſcht, bald ſtürmend drüber fließt.*

When at the beginning of 1788 she received a complaint from Weimar that Goethe, since he had been in Rome, had grown cold toward his friends at home, she, with her deep understanding of her son, wrote back that she did not believe it. "A hungry man seated at a well filled table will think neither of father nor of mother, neither of friend nor of sweetheart, until his hunger is satisfied; and no one can blame him for it." And so, even now, not a word fell from her lips which might be construed as a complaint that her son was apparently neglecting her. Because Goethe knew that he could always count on his mother's most intimate understanding of him, and her unalterable faith in his love, he could allow himself greater liberty toward her as to what he should do and what he should not do, than he could toward other people.

On the 12th of August he arrived in his native city, and was most cordially received by his mother and his old friends. He intended to remain there till the end of the month to please his mother, but also, as he says himself, to see whether it was possible for him to return to his old home to stay. After nine days, the length of time to which his visit was shortened, in consequence of the more rapid advance of the Prussian troops, he was "most forcibly convinced that his native city was no place for his permanent habitation." After spending two more pleasant days in Mainz with Georg Forster, Sömmering the anatomist, Huber the writer, and many friends of his youth, he journeyed on via Bingen, up the Nahe, to Treves, and thence via Luxemburg across the French boundary to Longwy, where he joined the Duke's regiment on the 27th of August. The ancient Roman structures in and near Treves, the Porta Nigra and the Igel

*Cf. vol. i., p. 86 f.

Monument, afforded him great pleasure, and gave him the joyful consciousness that the German world was, after all, not wholly lacking in things "genuine."

From the time he left Longwy he was obliged to accommodate himself to a military life, and he did it with remarkable success. His fearlessness in the presence of danger, his steadfastness in times of hardship, his equanimity and cheerfulness under all circumstances, his wide range of knowledge, his willingness to help, and his cleverness, won for him both the respect and the favour of officers and men. In him we find not the slightest trace of that awkward relation to the soldiers in the field, in which the idle observer so often finds himself involved, even though he enjoy the favour of the great, or be one of them. Here, as elsewhere, he was the peer, indeed, the superior of all.

Goethe found the army of the allies encamped about Longwy, and full of most sanguine hopes of soon vanquishing the enemy, but otherwise in very ill humour on account of the bad weather. They accused Jupiter Pluvius of being one of the Jacobins. On the many rest-days and halts Goethe found plenty to entertain him in his optical studies, which, so far as possible, he pursued with passion, even in the field. While the batteries were playing back and forth before Verdun, the next objective point of the army, he walked up and down during the night with Prince Reuss, and explained to him with much force until the grey of dawn the outlines—not of new dramas and novels, as the Prince expected, but—of his new theory of colours. Verdun soon surrendered, as Longwy had done, and Goethe began to share the conviction of the others, that the campaign would take a short and glorious course. "Everything is moving so swiftly that I shall probably soon be with thee again. . . . I shall bring thee a little bundle of things from Paris," he wrote to Christiane on the 2nd of September.

Immediately afterward the disillusioning process began. Instead of pushing forward hastily and overthrowing the French, before they had time to prepare for a defence, the army lay for eight days encamped about Verdun, a delay

which made the rainy weather and the bad commissariat doubly intolerable. When the army then, instead of marching straight ahead across the Forest of Argonne down into the plains of Champagne, swung in a wide curve around the wooded mountain range, making it possible, meanwhile, for the French to fortify themselves in that region, the disaffection grew still worse. In the course of time they stood at last face to face with the enemy on the western side of the mountains, and were hot with impatience to make the attack. But the commander-in-chief, the Duke of Brunswick, did little to satisfy this impatience. In his operations he was observing all the rules of the art of war, and considered it advisable, before risking a battle, to subject the position of the enemy to a violent bombardment.

It was on the famous day of Valmy, the 20th of September, 1792, that the cannonading took place. Finding it tedious with his regiment in the rear, Goethe wished to take advantage of the opportunity to become acquainted with the terror of battle. He rode out into a region where the cannon balls were striking in great numbers. On the way he was met by officers of the general staff, who begged him to go back with them. When they saw that their requests were of no avail they gave way, as he expresses it, to his well-known, wonderful obstinacy. He carried out his purpose, and after he had studied his state under the fire of cannon, as a physician observes his patient, he rode calmly back to his quarters.

Evening came on, and the French lines were still as unbroken as in the morning. Their failure in this first great encounter with the enemy spread an extraordinary feeling of dismay throughout the German army. Faith in the excellence of German generalship, and contempt for the enemy, were equally shaken. Yet, with all their fears, there was but one man in the whole army who divined the momentous significance of the day. During the discussion of the events of the day in the officers' quarters in the evening, Goethe, when called upon to express his opinion, said: "This spot and this day mark the beginning of a new epoch

in the history of the world, and you will be able to say that you were here." He felt that on this day the old Europe had laid down its arms before the new.

For the next nine days, because of deceptive negotiations entered into with the enemy, the army was again condemned to inactivity. It was left to fight with want, rain, and disease. Our poet had to undergo his full share of hardship, to which was added an oppressive tediousness, since here studies and the like were not to be thought of. Nevertheless his good humour did not fail him. To the Duchess Amalia he wrote, that people with deeper insight thrust all the blame on Wieland, because he had made the king of kings * a democrat, and had at least for a time made him desert the cause of his uncles, cousins, and godfathers. Goethe vowed to himself that, if he ever got home safe, he would never again complain of his neighbour's gable cutting off his view, nor of discomfort and tediousness in the German theatre, where one is at least under shelter. When at length, with shattered hopes, the discouraging retreat began, before the horrible weather had ceased, and all the hardships and privations were so increased that they became unbearable, his good spirits on one occasion forsook him. His companions remarked that it was the only time when he had made a sour face, and had neither encouraged them with serious words nor cheered them with pleasantry.

Slowly the sorrowful army trudged along toward the German boundary. When they came to the Meuse and were about to cross it too on their retreat, the Duke of Brunswick rode up to Goethe and said: "I am sorry indeed to see you in this unpleasant situation; but you will permit me to say that in one sense I am glad of it, for I know that you are one more man of insight and credibility who can testify that we have been defeated by the elements, and not by the enemy." When the army had crossed the Meuse the weather became more terrible than ever, which could hardly have been thought possible. "The discomforts, or, better, the

* *I. e.*, Jupiter. *Cf.* Wieland, *Neue Göttergespräche*, Leipsic, 1791, pp. 153, 165, 182, etc.—C.

evils became extreme. . . . I was deprived of even the barest necessities. . . . How one longed for straw, yes for even a piece of a board! but at last there was nothing left for us to do but to lie down on the cold, damp ground." The Duke was unwilling that Goethe should longer expose himself unnecessarily to these exhausting conditions. He urged him to separate himself from the regiment and go in a carriage, which was to take sick soldiers to Verdun, and there seek better shelter. Goethe heeded the admonition of his princely friend and, after the many remarkable experiences of a six-days' drive via Verdun, Etain, Spincourt, Longuyon, Longwy, and Arlon, arrived on the 14th of October in Luxemburg.

There he received the first full account of what a pitiful end the campaign had come to. Not only had the army ingloriously withdrawn from French territory without doing anything, they had surrendered back the captured fortress to the despised *sans-culottes*, whom on their outward march they had boasted they would devour hide and hair. With all the resignation to which he had become accustomed, this news filled Goethe with "a kind of furious rage." "Europe needs a Thirty Years' War to see what would have been sensible in 1792," he wrote from Luxemburg a day after his arrival.

Here he allowed himself six days for recovery, of which he was in the greater need as he had been one of the victims of the general epidemic of dysentery. Then he went to Treves. On the way thither the Igel Monument seemed to him, in his ill-humour and suffering condition, like a lighthouse sending out its beams to a sailor in the night. "Perhaps the power of antiquity was never so keenly felt as in this contrast—this, too, a monument of warlike times, and yet of happy, victorious days, and of the permanent welfare of active people in this region. . . . It held my attention closely for a long time; I took note of many things, and was sorry to leave, as I felt only the more uncomfortable in my miserable condition."

In Treves, where he again joined the Duke, Goethe

remained nine days, in order that he might completely recover. His stay there, agreeable to him from many points of view, was painfully disturbed by reports of new calamities. The French under Custine had advanced from Landau and occupied Speyer, Worms, Mainz, and Frankfort. Coblenz had also been on the point of falling into their hands, but was relieved by the returning Hessian and Prussian troops. Goethe went to Coblenz, which lay before him as beautiful as ever, but awoke in him none but sad thoughts of how times had changed. How sunny those days had been, when in the black eyes of charming Maximiliane La Roche he had sought balm for his Wetzlar wounds, and, two years later, when he dined here in the merry exuberance of youth with Lavater and Basedow!

The Duke and his regiment prepared to cross over to the right bank of the Rhine. Goethe had also thought of crossing over, and journeying up the Lahn valley, in order as quickly as possible to reach home. More than once he had written to Christiane how pleased he was that he should soon be with her again. But as he stood there and saw the majestic stream softly and quietly gliding down toward his friends in Düsseldorf, he was seized with "a longing to go out into the wide world, instead of returning to his narrow home." A careful weighing of these words will help us to understand how Goethe, though in August he had been sure that Frankfort was not the place for his permanent abode, now hesitated for two months, unable to arrive at a definite answer to the proposal, which had reached him in Treves, that he accept the post of alderman in his native city. He hastened to hire a boat, rowed down the river to Düsseldorf, and was most joyfully received by Fritz Jacobi and his family in the neighbouring town of Pempelfort. As Heinse also happened to be there Goethe found himself surrounded by almost the same circle of friends as in 1774.

Here, however, he could not help making the same observation as had forced itself upon him in Weimar after his return from Italy, that in his intellectual development he had left his friends far behind, that they were unable to

form any liking for his most recent works, and were not prepared to follow his scientific and philosophical ideas. Nevertheless there was still a great deal in common between them, and when Goethe spoke of Italy, and with the power of his eloquence conjured up the southern landscapes before the eyes of his hearers, they all hung on his words as in the fairest days of youth. Indeed, Goethe found his friends more Italian, more classical, than he himself was, for the moment, owing to the after-effects of his union with Christiane, his scientific studies, and, above all, the hard campaign. His friends still admired Sophocles, as they formerly had, but he was now unable to endure the Greek poet; they loved his *Iphigenie*, from which he himself had become estranged; they were enthusiastic over the Italians and abhorred the Dutch, whereas Goethe was more strongly attracted by the latter there in Düsseldorf than he had been for long years. As Lenchen Jacobi expressed it, he had "gone to seed." Nevertheless he was willing to put up with their divergent inclinations toward ideal beauty. He felt that he was only temporarily disinclined in that direction.

He was easily made to forget all differences of opinion and taste by the cordial love bestowed upon him by all the members of the family, by his old, true friend Fritz, the latter's step-sisters Lottchen and Lenchen, who had now reached the age of maturity, his daughter, who resembled her good departed mother, and his promising youngest son. Such a benefaction our poet had not received in a long time. He enjoyed this love in a comfortable, charmingly situated house, which assembled in its beautiful rooms, in addition to Heinse, other guests with lively spiritual interests, who more than ever before had been forced by the trend of events to seek refuge there; among them the beautiful and intellectual Frau von Coudenhoven, the Egeria of the Elector of Mainz, Baron Grimm, the famous author of *Correspondance Littéraire*, the Prussian Ambassador von Dohm, and his wife. Associated with them were many persons of worth from the city and the environs.

In such a circle it is not possible that apprehensions for the future should control one's mood, and so, in spite of the anxious present, the company was enlivened with great cheerfulness. There were evenings when laughter never ceased. Goethe, delighting to linger in this pleasant atmosphere, postponed his departure from day to day. Four weeks had already passed, and he would have stayed considerably longer, if the rapid advance of Dumouriez, which seemed already to be threatening Düsseldorf, had not scared him away. His departure was made somewhat easier for him by the fact that he did not return by a direct route to Weimar, but, on the roundabout way which he took, was invited to tarry at another attractive place, the home of Princess Gallitzin in Münster.

The Princess, with whom he had become acquainted at the time of her visit in Weimar in 1785, was a remarkable personality. The daughter of a Prussian general, and the wife of a Russian prince, she had gradually torn away from unbelief and doubt, and from the vain pleasures of the world, and had retired from The Hague, where her husband was ambassador, to the quiet of Münster, where she sought contentment in religion, philosophy, and art. At first an adherent of the sentimentalism of Hamann, who in his last days had been her guest, and whom she had buried in her garden, she had finally found her peace of soul in Catholicism, to which she now devoted all her strength. Gentle, tender, beneficent, and tolerant toward everyone in whom she recognised a striving toward higher things, her personality resembled that of Fräulein von Klettenberg.* In the presence of such people the gentle, tender, sympathetic sides of Goethe's nature were revealed, and he was able, in spite of his opposing views, to talk with them about the important questions of life, without wounding their most sacred feelings. Besides, in the consideration of the works of art which the Princess possessed, and in the discussion of the fundamental principles of esthetics, there was always, in her case, a common

* Goethe calls her a "beautiful soul" in *Br.*, x., 47, 11.

ground upon which their differences of opinion vanished, and where she was glad to be his believing hearer and pupil. To the other members of the circle who assembled in her home, where the distinguished vicar-general of the bishopric, Baron von Fürstenberg, outshone all the others, Goethe knew how to make himself very agreeable. In speaking of his observations in Rome he mentioned such things as could not fail to appeal to any Catholic, and he put such warmth into his narrations that the group of spiritual friends listened devoutly; indeed one man inquired whether he were not really a Catholic. Even the Princess was surprised at his bearing, and she made no secret of the fact that before his arrival she had received a letter warning her to be on her guard, for Goethe knew how to put on such a pious appearance that one might take him to be religious, and even a Catholic. Goethe replied that his piety was not pretended, but real, for he beheld things with his clear, innocent senses, and represented them in the same way. This gave him an understanding of others' natures, and he respected them. But greater than the impression of these statements upon the Princess must have been that produced by the deep harmony which she perceived in him, and which could only have been the outgrowth of a divine faith permeating him. This manner, to borrow Goethe's own words, inspired her with infinite confidence in him, and at their parting she cherished the hope of seeing him again at her side, if not in this world, at least in the next. Here again we find Goethe loth to part. In this house he had felt as happy as he had once in the angelic stillness of Lavater's home, and he was exceedingly sorry that a further stay was impossible because of his too hasty announcement of his return home.

"His too hasty announcement of his return home"—after an absence of four months, and with only two more weeks till Christmas! How much we can divine behind these words! They should at least guard one against attaching too much weight to phrases which Goethe uses in speaking of his love for Christiane, of his longing for her, etc.

After a long, tiresome journey he arrived in Weimar on the 16th of December.

In view of the excesses of the revolutionists in France he found little to refresh his spirit in the events of the succeeding months. In youth the poet had expressed his horror at the execution of Charles I., and his hope that such acts of popular violence might never again be committed. Now not only did that very thing repeat itself, but on this occasion it assumed a more terrible form. Louis XVI. was executed on the 21st of January, 1793. Upon receipt of this to him fearful news Goethe felt discouraged to think how easily the costly campaign in which he had taken part might have rescued the King, if the leadership had been more determined. In order to draw his mind away from the consideration of the horrors of the revolution he plunged into the further continuation of his optical studies, and into the composition of the humorous, satirical poem *Reineke Fuchs*. Scarcely had he finished the latter when he was again obliged to go to the scene of the war.

During the winter the troops of the allies had driven the French out of the region between the Nahe and the Rhine, and had at the same time won back the possession of Frankfort. They were preparing to lay siege to Mainz in the spring. The Duke had several times expressed to Goethe his desire that he should come back to him and the army; he could very conveniently come over from his native city and witness such a remarkable event as the siege of Mainz promised to be. So Goethe left home on the 12th of May, spent ten days with his mother, and then went directly to the camp and joined the Duke, as it was not to his liking to look on only occasionally and from a distance. It was much more interesting to him to stand beside the combatants in the trenches and on the most advanced posts, even though the bullets and shells were striking all about him. Now and then attacks at night, conflagrations, and explosions, broke the monotony, but there were also many tedious hours which he scarcely knew how to while away.

Finally, on the 23d of July, the fortress surrendered,

and Goethe was enabled to enter the devastated city, in which a year before he had passed such happy hours. With him went Sömmering, who had fled to Frankfort to escape the French, whereas Georg Forster, who had joined the revolution and had laboured for it in Mainz and the surrounding country, had gone to Paris, where, surrounded by "heartless devils," he experienced a most fearful awakening from his dream of liberty and the fraternity of nations. Little as the Mainz clubbists (Jacobins), who had made common cause with the French, were congenial to Goethe, nevertheless his humanity and chivalry revolted at the thought of leaving them to the vengeance of the returning Mainz emigrants. When on one occasion fugitive clubbists were threatened with death before his windows, he opposed the violence of the mob, and, by his determined interference, saved the lives of those attacked.

From Mainz he made excursions to Wiesbaden and Schwalbach, and then went via Mannheim and Heidelberg, where he passed several days with his brother-in-law Schlosser, to Frankfort, where he remained with his mother till the 19th of August. This marked the end of the campaign, so far as he was concerned, and of his part in the whole war. The Duke, whose continued absence was exceedingly disadvantageous to his country, retired from the service in the winter, and from that time on Goethe had no occasion for further journeys.

Accordingly the following years were outwardly more quiet. Inwardly the anxiety became at first more intense. The year 1794 especially brought heavy cares. The French gained new victories, so that as far down as Cologne they drove the allied armies almost entirely from the left bank of the Rhine, and already they were seen overflowing the right bank with irresistible power. Whoever had anything to lose sought a safe retreat for his person and his movable property. Fritz Jacobi fled to Holstein, Schlosser to Bayreuth. Goethe's mother allowed her son to persuade her to move at least her most valuable possessions to Langensalza, but she herself, trusting in God, refused to leave Frank-

fort. She laughed at the cowards who took to their heels; the *sans-culottes* could not cause her a single sleepless night. Many acquaintances and friends sent Goethe their spare thalers and valuables; others looked toward Weimar as a safe place of refuge for their persons.

While from this side the revolution kept the poet in a state of continual turmoil, it affected him similarly from another side. Its successes in war made stronger the propaganda of its ideas; less now among the educated and the well-to-do, whose ardour had been cooled by the deeds of horror in Paris and by their own danger, than among the lower classes, who still had the support of a considerable number of those intellectually more prominent. Goethe was quite out of patience with this element, which was to be found even in his immediate environment. "Some of my friends are behaving in a fashion that borders closely on insanity," he wrote to Heinrich Meyer, congratulating him on not being haunted by that nasty ghost that goes by the name of spirit of the times. At the same time (August, 1794) Baron von Gagern called upon the leading minds, first of all Goethe, to devote their pens to the good cause of silencing the miserable band of agitators. He begged them to constitute themselves the organs of a new federation of German princes, which should save the fatherland from anarchy. Goethe thanked the baron for the confidence he had shown in him, but considered it impossible to unite princes and authors in a common undertaking. So far as he himself was concerned, he "had done little as an author, but as a private individual had done everything possible, at least in one small corner, to abate party spirit and restore equilibrium."

Let us now consider what Goethe did as an author to stem the tide of the general uprising.

V

THE WRITER AND THE REVOLUTION

Inferiority of Goethe's works dealing with the French revolution—*Der Gross-Cophta*, a dramatisation of the "diamond necklace" affair—Its defects—*Der Bürgergeneral*, a hastily composed farce—*Die Aufgeregten*, a fragment—Its spirit became antiquated before the work was finished—*Das Mädchen von Oberkirch*, fragment of a tragedy of family life—Period of six years with no writing dealing with the revolution—*Das Märchen*—Interpretation of its symbolism—*Die natürliche Tochter*—Sources—Analysis of plot—Style—Characters—Excellence of first three acts—Weakness of last two acts—Reception of drama—Fragment of a trilogy—Not a reflection of historical conditions—Plan of second and third parts of trilogy—Leading rôle given to woman—Goethe's failure to embody spirit of times in any work dealing directly with the revolution—His sympathy with the need of the revolution—Revolutions fault of the rulers, not of the governed—Goethe's antagonism toward the methods of the opposition—His general attitude—Influence of the revolution on Germany—Peaceful progress disturbed—Goethe's failure to foresee outcome—He shows too much political realism, too little faith in common people—Distorted reflection of times in his writings attempting to mirror them.

EVEN the most fertile mind experiences years of drought. The writings in which Goethe deals with the French revolution are for the most part the products of such a season. As they are, however, very characteristic of him as a man and a statesman, we are obliged to devote more space to their consideration than we should if we were treating them merely as literature.

Der Gross-Cophta (1792) belongs to this group of writings, more because of the author's purpose than as a finished product. In it Goethe dramatised the story of the "diamond necklace," in which he had straightway recognised an omen of an approaching revolution; but he neglected to

give the intrigue of the drama the historical background which it had in reality. Thus the play always lacked the element of higher interest. The plot is ordinary and is made very awkward by the introduction of the magician. The society portrayed is about as good and about as bad, as clever and as silly, as in any other period of history; the court is pure and rather aloof; the military honest, faithful, blindly obedient, chivalrous. Virtue triumphs quickly and easily; vice is put to shame and punished.

By no possibility can we find ourselves suspecting that the incident which forms the plot of the play takes place upon undermined ground into which throne and kingdom will soon sink. This defect is all the more striking inasmuch as Goethe, as early as 1781, had recognised a symptom of the decadence of society in Cagliostro's success as a swindler, which was four years later so brilliantly demonstrated in the famous affair of the "diamond necklace." On the 22d of June, 1781, he wrote to Lavater: "So far as the secret arts of Cagliostro are concerned, I am very mistrustful of all reports. . . . I have traces, not to say news, of a great mass of lies that steal about in the dark. . . . Believe me, our moral and political world is undermined with subterranean passages, cellars, and sewers."

To explain the defect in the play we need but recall the history of its composition. Goethe did not begin the dramatisation till after he had gone to Italy. His gloomy forebodings had taken flight, his own cheerfulness cast its friendly reflection in the play, and the plot resolved itself in his mind into one of those situations, met with thousands of times in experience, in which lovers and fools are mystified by sly deceivers. Such a subject was well suited for comic opera, for which Goethe always had an unfortunate liking. He set to work at it with great delight, and continued the composition of it after his return to Germany. Technical difficulties, and the fact that the plot had again taken on a very serious aspect, caused his zeal for the completion of the opera to grow cold. But in order not to lose his work entirely, and, at the same time, to gain a new play that could

be performed in the theatre of which he had just become the director, he quickly transformed the opera in 1791 into a somewhat long five-act comedy in prose, yet without being able to rid the libretto of its shallowness. For a comic opera the theme and treatment would have sufficed; for a more serious drama they are too light. On the stage the play was a failure almost everywhere. During the second performance in Leipsic the audience made such an uproar that the play had to be stricken out of the répertoire. Even Goethe's friends rejected the *Gross-Cophta*. They no longer recognised the poet of *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*. Even Goethe's politico-moral purpose of sounding a warning against fantasts and tricksters, who were stirring up so much evil under the cloak of politics, was brought to nought, because of the inartistic construction of the play. Who would admit himself so stupid as to believe, with the persons of the play, that the *Gross-Cophta* is a man of wonders, when there is nothing to warrant such belief beyond a flimsy fabric of mysterious phrases, and a glass ball, in which nobody but a young girl sees anything? Much more tangible evidence would be required. That the poet knew how to paint a magician in whom one cannot help believing is fully shown by the character of Mephisto.

Whereas in *Der Gross-Cophta* the revolution is hardly visible even in the distance, we really hear its first faint mutterings in a little one-act comedy, *Der Bürgergeneral*, which Goethe wrote in April, 1793. The swaggering village barber and politician Schnaps, a *mauvais sujet*, rigs himself out in a French uniform, which has accidentally come into his possession, and palms himself off upon silly Märten as a citizen general, to whom the commissioners of the Jacobin Club have entrusted the task of revolutionising the village. Looking upon a pot of milk before him as a metaphorical manor, he captures it and begins to empty it, to the great annoyance of the peasant, and to the still greater vexation of the latter's son-in-law and daughter. A fight ensues. The village justice, hearing the noise, rushes in and is about to arrest all the participants as suspicious disturbers of the

peace, but the sensible and noble-minded lord of the manor prevents him, saying that such trifles should not be punished. "Untimely commands, untimely punishments only increase the evil. In a country where the prince holds himself aloof from no one, where all the estates think justly of each other, where no man is hindered from acting in his own way, where useful insight and knowledge are spread abroad,—there no parties will arise. Whatever takes place in the world will arouse attention, but revolutionary sentiments on the part of whole nations will have no influence. We shall be thankful in our hearts that we see a bright sky above us, while elsewhere unfortunate hurricanes lay waste immeasurable fields." With these pleas, to which a few others are added, the play comes quietly to an end.

In these teachings we feel as though we were listening to Minister of State Goethe preaching from the stage, appealing to the hearts of his Weimar subjects to conserve their happiness. Apart from this obtrusive didactic tendency, which Goethe himself later condemned, one cannot deny that the play is excellently made. But one must not take it for more than it pretends to be, namely, jesting persiflage at the foolish, farcical revolutions, such as in those days were occasionally heard of in the lower walks of German life across the Rhine. Many critics have condemned it because they considered it an attempt to hold the mirror of the stage before the tremendous movements which the French revolution brought forth in Germany. But this is doing the poet a great injustice. He wrote the farce in three days, thinking more of creating happy rôles for the actors Beck and Malcolmi than of writing an attack on the revolution.

The play met with the utmost success in Weimar. Goethe received congratulations from Herder, Jacobi, Bertuch, and later from Schiller, who even planned a comedy in the same vein. In wider circles, on the other hand, people were too much carried away by the great ideas and the seriousness of the times to laugh at any real or fancied caricature of them. Furthermore there were very few German states in which the closing remarks could hope to find a

friendly echo such as the poet had every reason to expect in well governed Weimar.

Die Aufgeregten, a fragmentary five-act comedy, which Goethe probably wrote in the autumn of 1793, deals with the great phenomena of the time in a more serious and more profound way. Whereas in *Der Bürgergeneral* it is merely a question of a farcical revolution, which a degenerate barber introduces into the idyllic life of the peaceable villagers, in *Die Aufgeregten* we see the ideas of the revolution beginning to penetrate the masses, and the peasants rising in serious opposition to the lords.

Here again the agitator is a barber. He is not, however a foul-mouthed, indolent tale-bearer, like Schnaps, but a highly respected citizen, an admirer of "Old Fritz," and his egoism is accompanied by enough principle and ambition to keep him from appearing mean and despicable. Furthermore he is not the only man who disseminates revolutionary ideas among the peasants. By his side stands the count's tutor, a young clergyman, who has embraced the new movement out of pure enthusiasm for the cause of humanity. Neither are the peasants mere stupid dupes, who parrot slogans they do not understand; their grievances against their lords are just. The privileged class, on the other hand, is not represented solely by noble-minded individuals, such as we have become acquainted with in the landlord of *Der Bürgergeneral;* but also by men of a different stamp.

The conflict is unfortunately not one between great conflicting principles, but between certain material advantages and disadvantages, and instead of dividing a whole nation into hostile camps it involves but three villages with their handful of peasants. Even within this circumscribed sphere it would have been possible for the opposing elements to become engaged in a hot conflict, stirring their deepest emotions and bringing out the best that was in them. But the poet precluded this possibility by giving the plot a turn more in keeping with his own nature. Hardly has the storm gathered when, under the influence of the Countess and her daughter, it is converted into a gentle

zephyr, and the vanishing clouds leave a more serene sky than has been witnessed in the region for decades. This quick, harmonious dénouement was well fitted to satisfy Goethe's spiritual and political needs, but it was ruinous to the play. The third and fourth acts were left as mere sketches. That Goethe did not finish the play, after having so nearly completed it, may be accounted for in more than one way. In the first place, it may have been due to the circumstance that the play was left too far behind by the events of the day. "The poet was unable to keep pace with the onward rolling history of the world." How could he himself, how could the public, any longer be interested in an abortive petty revolution in a German village, when on the further side of the Rhine a great empire was trembling with volcanic upheavals?

For one who in such times wished to choose the events of the day for dramatic treatment, there was nothing to be gained by rocking himself on the gently rippling waves of a German pond, when there was an opportunity to venture out upon the roaring sea that was heaving and surging in France. The poet evidently felt this, and yet he continued to avoid the high sea, keeping within the familiar fairway along the coast, in Alsatia. He recognised that the tendency of his next drama—for all his plays dealing with the revolution have a tendency—must be different from that embodied in *Die Aufgeregten*. Confronted by the mad ravings of the French demagogues, it could no longer be to him a question of "for" or "against," of the relative justification of opposing interests or ideas. There could be but one purpose for the poet and statesman, that of exposing the revolution in all its infamy and horror.

Late in 1793, or early in 1794, Goethe invented the plot of *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch*,[22] which remained unknown till found among his posthumous papers. This was to be a five-act tragedy. By making none but humble persons victims of the revolution, and by putting the more subordinate elements in the foreground, instead of the leaders, thus excluding higher political motives from the progress

of the action, he failed to give even this play the element of thrilling historical interest. He made of it a tragedy of family life, which has the power to stir us to our inmost depths, but cannot make us feel that the atmosphere is one of great events, horrible though they be. We say: "He made of it," in spite of the fact that not more than two scenes were elaborated, and the rest of the plot is merely indicated in a very meagre sketch. Nevertheless the outlines are full enough to enable us to recognise with a reasonable degree of certainty what was to have been the character of the play.

Marie, the maid of Oberkirch, known throughout her home country as a good and capable girl, has for some time been in the service of a noble family of Strasburg, of whom all but the Countess and her nephew, Baron Karl, have fled before the storms of the revolution. At the introduction of the new cult her beauty attracts the attention of those in authority, and she is selected to represent the goddess of reason in the cathedral. She consents to assume the rôle, which she despises,—doubtless in order to save the Countess and Baron Karl. Some incident in the cathedral causes her to lose control of herself, her better nature revolts at the blasphemy forced upon her, and thus she brings ruin upon herself, and, apparently, upon the family of the Countess.

It will be observed how closely the action was to confine itself to personal and family relations. The catastrophe is not brought about by any change in the course of historical events, nor does it produce any such change, which would have given general significance to what is here purely accidental and individual.

After this attempt to grapple with the tremendous movement as a writer had proved a failure, Goethe let six years go by before he again stretched out his hand toward the dangerous subject. He merely followed the events of the time with admonitions to the German nation, expressed now in plain, outspoken language, now in symbols. The outspoken admonitions are contained in *Hermann und Dorothea*, to which we shall devote a special chapter (IX), as the poem in itself has no connection with the political

tendency which is incidentally expressed in it; the symbolic are to be found in *Das Märchen*, which, being inspired by contemporary political motives, was intended to influence those particular times, though it has an eternal significance as well as a temporal. It is the important last number of a cycle of otherwise insignificant stories, to which Goethe gave the general title *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, which, except for *Das Märchen*, we should have been glad to miss among his works, in spite of the fact that they have left their mark on the history of the German novelette.

Das Märchen was written in August and September, 1795, that is to say, after the treaty of Basel, in which Prussia, consulting only her own interests, had withdrawn from the coalition against the revolution, and had left Germany more disrupted and helpless than before. Bearing this situation in mind, as well as Goethe's repeated complaints of the lack of public spirit, devotion, energy, and political wisdom in Germany; remembering also the close of the *Lehrjahre*, the tendency of *Pandora*, the *Wanderjahre*, and *Faust;* and, finally, taking into consideration the fact that in September, 1795, when the Landgrave of Darmstadt and the Elector of Mainz arrived in Weimar on their flight before the French, Goethe had quoted the verses of the beautiful lily,

Ach! warum ſteht der Tempel nicht am Fluſſe!
Ach! warum iſt die Brücke nicht gebaut!*

and that on the 16th of October, upon the receipt of the news that Goethe was not going to follow the Duke to the scene of the war, Schiller remarked: "I am indeed glad to know that you are still far away from the troubles on the Main, the 'shadow of the giant' might easily take hold of you somewhat ungently,"—we cannot easily fail to grasp the significance of *Das Märchen*. Let us seek to discover it, as it reveals itself to us through the main outlines of the story.

The young king—the genius of the German people, or,

* Why standeth not the temple by the river?
Oh! why is not the bridge already built?

more accurately, the genius of the German people in that belletristic era—has devoted himself to the cult of the lily, the earthly symbol of beauty, as revealed in art and poetry, and in the amenities of social life—and by so doing has lost all his active energy. At present he dwells on the opposite shore of the river from the beautiful lily. Conscious as he is of his miserable situation, nevertheless he cherishes no other longing than to go back to her, even though to touch her cost him his life.

Neither is the beautiful lily content, much as she is worshipped. She longs for a different life, for now she lames everything she beholds, and kills everything she touches. Whatever she plants, instead of bearing fruit, from which men might receive nourishment, produces only beautiful forms for the delectation of the eye. As there is only an occasional visitor to break the monotony of her loneliness, she has a longing for the opposite shore, where nourishing plants grow and men dwell, and where there is a certain temple under ground. It has been prophesied that this temple will some day rise to the surface and bring her salvation.

The other side of the river is not attractive either. The world, as it is represented in the wife of the old man, is toilsome, talkative, vain, infirm with age, and foolish. She carries with ease that which is dead, but that which is alive is to her a heavy burden. Instead of making a little effort to pay for a mistake, she prefers to go on getting more and more deeply involved in debt. Among the crowd, it is true, there are wise people, the poets, who appear as *ignes fatui*, but they have not yet made the world wise. The multitude does not know what to do with the gold of wisdom which they scatter broadcast, nor can they themselves boast that it enters into their flesh and blood. They take it in to pass it out again, and remain as poor as before. Everybody complains, everybody lacks something, everybody has some heavy burden, and everybody lays the blame for the burden which weighs him down upon another or upon fate. Perhaps it would usher in a better state, if the ideal, but

consuming, kingdom of the lily should form a union with the real and nourishing kingdom beyond the river. But the means of communication across the river are very inadequate; there is no solid bridge. A ferryman now and then sets passengers over, but only for pay, and only out of the kingdom of beauty; the way into that kingdom each must win on his own feet. He must have recourse to the shadow of the giant—political delusion, crazy enthusiasm for higher things—which stretches across the river when the sun is low, or to the slender bridge which the serpent—public spirit, springing from highest wisdom—forms out of her own body at the hour of noon. The latter seems to be dangerous, for the egoist thinks it will endanger his ego, if he is to devote himself to the common welfare; the former is really dangerous, for the shadow of the giant occasionally lays rough hands upon wayfarers and robs them.

Thus the imperfect conditions remain unimproved on both sides of the river. In the kingdom of the lily they even grow considerably worse. The lily, by her touch, has killed her favourite, the singer, the canary bird, and the young king, who rushed up to her. The lily mourns, her companions mourn. Even the wife of the old man, when she arrives, begins to mourn that her hand which she dipped into the river is withering away. The saviour appears in the person of her husband, the old man with the lamp, which refreshes everything that is alive. It is God himself; he has wedded himself to the world—entirely in accordance with Goethe's pantheistic views. "He comes from the world and goes into the world." He knows, directs, guides every one, yet in such a way that he only shows men the way, the goal. The rest they must do themselves. On his arrival among the unfortunates in the kingdom of the lily, he says: "Help will not come from one man, but from many united at the proper time," and "Let every man do his duty, and universal happiness will drive away all individual sorrows."

The admonition has its effect, especially upon the wise serpent. Having formed with her body a bridge, over

which the sorrowful procession, headed by the old man, passes to the opposite shore, she sacrifices herself. She falls to pieces, and the separate pieces, each a jewel, are thrown into the water. Through this sacrifice the dead king is immediately brought back to life. But he still needs many things in order that his life may become fruitful. So the old man leads him down into the temple under the ground, which, because of the sacrifice of the serpent, is now able to rise to the surface. In the temple sit the golden king of wisdom, the silver king of appearances—dignity, splendour—and the bronze king of power —force, strength. The bronze king invests him with a sword, the silver king with a sceptre, the golden king crowns him with an oak wreath, saying, "Know thou the highest things." Now for the first time true life courses through the king's veins, power moderated and guided by wisdom and dignity. Now for the first time he is able truly to enjoy the lily, beauty and love. He is permitted to embrace her, without being killed by her.

By the side of these three metal kings there has been standing in the temple a fourth, whose composition was a confused mixture of the metals of the others. Now that an organically united kingdom has arisen, he falls down in a heap, as a thing half-way between lump and form. He is obviously the German Empire. The giant, on the other hand, becomes powerless, and is transformed into a reddish-looking statue, whose shadow indicates the hours, which are not marked by numbers, but by noble, significant pictures. The confusion embodied in political fanaticism loses its power, but the enthusiasm which it engenders remains and applies itself, now to this, now to that noble and important task. The wife of the old man, the world, has also undergone transformation. She has again become young and beautiful, and the old man promises her to try another thousand years with her. Still another thing of great importance occurs. At the door of the temple, which now stands on the shore, there begins a splendid, broad, solid bridge. The jewels, into which the serpent burst on

sacrificing herself, have turned into the piers upon which it has been built. "Remember the serpent in honour," said the old man to the king, "thou art indebted to her for thy life, and thy peoples for the bridge, by means of which these neighbouring shores are now for the first time enlivened and united into one country."

On the 9th of November, 1799, Napoleon was made First Consul for a term of ten years. At that moment the revolutionary phase in the history of France may be said to have come to an end. A calm consideration of all that had taken place was now possible. Immediately there matured in Goethe's mind the determination to carry out his long cherished, long postponed plan of painting a comprehensive picture of the extraordinary world-event which he had lived to witness, in order both to give due and final consideration to his accumulated wealth of thoughts and impressions, and to rid his mind of the burden. A lucky coincidence favoured his purpose. Nine days after Napoleon's *coup d'état* there fell into Goethe's hands the *Mémoires historiques de Stéphanie-Louise de Bourbon-Conti*, which had appeared the year before, and which covered the whole period of the revolution from its earliest conception to its last dying convulsions. In this work he recognised a plot suitable for his purposes, and on the 6th and 7th of December laid the foundation of his great, new dramatic structure, *Die natürliche Tochter*.

Other work crowded back the execution of the project. It may have seemed to the poet just as well to pause for a while and let the immediate past become a little more remote. Meanwhile the final outcome of events became more and more apparent. In 1802 France made peace with all nations, and Napoleon became Consul for life. This marked the end both of the revolutionary and, as it seemed, of the republican and warlike epoch in Europe. The poet was now able to devote himself to his task with greater freedom of mind. In the years 1801 and 1802 he had worked away zealously at it, and it had kept growing larger and larger, until the great mass of material

could no longer be contained in the limited space of a single play. He lengthened the plan into a trilogy, of which the first part was finished in the spring of 1803.

The moment that Goethe determined to make the revolution in all its greatness the subject of a poetical composition, he was obliged to lay aside all fear of the dread revolutionary centre and to advance boldly to the edge of the crater. The scene of the greater part of the play is accordingly laid in the neighborhood of the foreign capital, but the exact place is not given.

Eugenie is the natural daughter of the Duke, the uncle of the King. Out of consideration for her mother, who also belongs to the royal house, she remains in concealment, but is brought up after the manner of a princess. After her mother's death it is the wish of her father, who loves her above everything else, to bring her out into the world. So he begs the King to recognise her publicly as a princess of the blood. The good King, who is anxious to put the Duke, his old adversary, in his debt, readily consents, promising that he will on his own birthday fulfil the wish of his uncle.

This purpose is discovered by the Duke's son, a dissolute, scheming, jealous fellow, who begrudges his half-sister the patrimony which she hopes to receive as a princess of the blood. His secretary, the betrothed of Eugenie's governess, receives from him the commission to cause the maiden to disappear before the day of her début,—by death, if all other measures fail. The governess, in order to save her beloved pupil from cruel murder, allows herself to be persuaded by the secretary to take her across the sea to the Islands. Eugenie, carried away by force, arrives in the seaport, where she is overcome with despair and shows an unwillingness to leave her dear native land, now doubly dear to her, because she knows only too well that in the heat of the fever-infested tropics she will be exposed to the horrors of a lingering death. To be sure, the governess has pointed out to her a way to save her life and remain in her home country—by giving her hand to a man of the commonalty and by keeping her lineage and her whereabouts a

profound secret. It is possible for her to embrace this means of escape at once, as a noble-minded man, the Judge, has already offered her his hand. She refuses his offer, however, on the ground that she does not return his love and does not care to descend to the humble life of the commonalty. In the course of a conversation with a monk she begins to realise fully what she has surmised from words of her father and the King, that the kingdom is threatened with sudden overthrow. This stirs the heroic blood in her veins and she hopes that in the hour of danger hanging over the royal house and her native country she will be able to exert a saving influence. With this great end in view she overcomes her hesitation and consents to marry the Judge. She will live in quiet concealment on his estate till the hour of danger calls her. Meanwhile a report has been brought to her father that she has had an accident, while riding to the chase, and that her form is so mangled that it is horrible to behold. This leads her deeply affected father to forego viewing the remains of his daughter, which he is told have been interred near the scene of the accident. Thus the nefarious plan of the son succeeds.

This is in brief the substance of the plot. Let us first consider it apart from its significance as a reflection of conditions on the eve of the revolution.

In this drama Goethe has returned to the exalted style of *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, and the lines have the same rhythmical melody.[23] The language itself, however, differs more widely from natural speech than in those works. We begin to notice the manner of Goethe in his old age, especially the great compactness of expression. The spirit of the poet has broadened; he takes into consideration the wide relations which every thing and every occurrence have to other things and other occurrences, and weighs the full significance of every detail in itself. But his broadened spirit has at its disposal the same narrow words as before, and, in verse, to counteract the narrowness of the individual word by multiplying words is to him offensive. Hence there is nothing left for him but to create for his thought a new,

closely-woven dress by combining, compounding, and heaping up words in terse, pregnant expressions, by condensing the significant, and by omitting the article, which occupies space uselessly and disturbs the forcible beauty of the absolute idea. It is his avowed purpose that the whole form shall be the product of art. It is not meant to bear any traces of the commonplace and the natural. Both in the persons themselves and in their speech the natural is to appear in a higher, nobler form, which alone deserves to be called art. To this end the form, in itself rhythmical, is made still more rhythmical by means of musical embellishments, such as alliteration, or by means of stylistic adornments, such as antithesis and parallelism. Even in the expression of simple things the poet often affects an elevated style. For example, the fact that the ship is preparing to sail is clothed in the affected turn: "Already the voyage is stirring busily in the harbour," and the sunset is described with the once rejected mythological picture: "When Phœbus now prepares his fire-streaming couch."

In this way the poet's style occasionally becomes strangely studied, or, contrary to his intention, falls into verbosity, in striking contrast to his usual terseness, which barely leaves him room to express his thought. This verbosity, however, is not always real, that is to say, avoidable, considering his artistic purposes; as, for example, in the jewel scene, when he does not make Eugenie say briefly, "Reach me the ornaments of pearls and jewels," but: "Now lend me the soft light of pearls and the sparkling power of jewels." Who would fail to recognise what a beautiful effect he here produces by means of apparent verbosity and affectation? Eugenie is given an opportunity to tarry longer over the glorious ornaments, and we ourselves see the soft splendour and the sparkling lights playing about the charming maiden, and hence the more easily sympathise with her curiosity and vanity, which is tantamount to excusing them.

Let him who finds fault with this style remember that Shakespeare revels in such poetical and rhetorical devices, which are the less noticeable only because his energetic

delineation of character and the steadily progressing action make us forget them. By paying so much attention to style, and making his language far from true to life and nature, Goethe opened the way for a wrong understanding of his poem. He has from the very outset left the impression that persons who speak thus could not be men and women of flesh and blood; they could only be expensively dressed shades, symbolical types. The poet has given further grounds for this prejudice in another outward circumstance: with the exception of the heroine, he has given none of the personages names. The characters are: the King, the Duke, the Count, the Governess, the Secretary, the Judge, etc. This seems to imply that the poet intended to portray types, and not individuals. What an error to think so! Goethe while in Italy had, to be sure, advanced to the knowledge that an artist must always represent something typical, if he would attain the highest results, but it must always be done through the medium of a living individual with a well-defined character. How to accomplish this coalescence is the secret of perfect art. Goethe had always been in possession of this secret, but after his sojourn in Italy he practised it with greater skill and more conscious power. In the consciousness of his high power and his high aims he was able to say to himself: "What need have I of taking the trouble to give my personages names? Even though they have no names, they have within themselves the highest reality, because I have given the individual a universally recognised character. They are for the centuries to come. They will always recur. People will always find new representatives of their kind, and I should only be obscuring their eternal significance if I were to attach definite names to them."

Indeed, if one will only take the pains to penetrate the exquisitely wrought veil with which he has enveloped the human figures, one will find beneath, not bare skeletons, but whole human beings, with very definite characters, and hearts pulsating with warm life. This is especially true of the heroine, Eugenie, next to Adelheid perhaps the most

remarkable and most interesting woman character that Goethe ever created. A queenly maiden, with a tall, commanding figure of dazzling beauty, and an ardent temperament, brave and daring. Like a bird soaring in the air, she flies along on her palfrey, "full of the feeling of the double power of a Centaur, over valley and hill, over river and ditch." She has in her something of the demonic self-confidence of an *Übermensch*. "To one of unmeasured powers danger bows." From this consciousness of energy and this assurance springs her desire, young as she is, to share with "highly exalted men commanding authority and noble influence." Because of her strenuous ambitions love, as a mere tender emotion of the soul, is wholly strange to her. She has love in her heart, but it is love for her native land, which to her, the enthusiastic, idealistic royalist, is synonymous with the royal house. If she must marry, her husband must be a man who, great himself, can unite with her in great deeds for the salvation of their country, not one by whose side she is to find contentment in the harmonious life of a quiet home. Yet, with all this manliness, she is no Maid of Orleans who would don a rough coat of mail; she is a child and a woman, who takes the greatest delight in jewelry and fine clothes.[24] With her childlikeness harmonises her unsullied purity of heart, and her naïve faith in the innate good in every man. With all her boldness she is tender and devoted, with all her pride in her kingly ancestry she is without the slightest trace of haughtiness, with all her pamperedness she is grateful and kind; in short, she is the most lovable creature in the world. Nor does she lack the charm which the Muse bestows. She is gifted by nature with a pleasing poetical talent, and her creations come into being when she is under the power of a sudden inspiration. "This very moment it hovers joyously before my mind; I must seize it, or it will escape me."

She is a strange combination, and yet, strange as she is, every one must admit that she is not a capricious, hollow product of the poet's fancy, but a real being, full of inward, harmonious truth, if only an actress could be found who,

gifted with spirit, strength, and beauty, would represent her in her own character, and not be led by the pompous flow of the lines to portray her with the majestic dignity of an Iphigenia or a Leonora of Este. Every movement of her muscles, every little twitch should be full of energy, her eye full of fire, her whole personality overflowing with vitality, at first joyous, later serious, half an Amazon, half a child of the world; half a heroine, half a star of the salon.

Equally realistic are the other characters of the play, though less fully elaborated. Even such small minor personages as the Governor, the Abbess, the Monk, are delineated with remarkable clearness. Only the Count, with the few verses which he has to speak, is left indistinct.

Equally high recognition is due to the plot, especially in the first three acts. Here the action moves forward rapidly through closely connected scenes, holding the audience in the greatest suspense, while, at the same time, previous events and conditions are suggested with masterly brevity and ease. To be sure, it is necessary here, as in the case of *Tasso*, that one have the ability, or take the pains, to gain an insight into the poet's clever drawing. For instance, one who is neither willing nor able to follow in the first act the contrast between the Duke and the King, or that between the Duke and his daughter, in the many infinitely fine strokes, may at times find this act wearisome. But any other kind of drawing would have been a lower grade of art, considering the high position and education of the personages. When Herder used the expression "silver-pencil drawing," in speaking of the play, he meant it as a term of praise, contrasting it with the manner in which Schiller spattered with his fat colour-dauber. There has been a desire on the part of some later critics to make it appear as a weakness in the composition, or a phantom-like quality of the figures, resulting from the supposed effort to make them typical. In the motivation there is but one fault to be found, and that is that the Duke so readily decides not to look again upon the form of his deceased daughter, and that no very plausible reason is given for his not having

been informed of the accident before her burial. How deep and true, on the other hand, is the reason assigned for his sudden recovery from grief! He is in a state of most bitter despair; he curses himself and the whole world; henceforth he is determined that mourning shall be his sole occupation. In vain does the priest appeal to his ambition, to his obligations toward his country (all whose hopes rest upon him), to the inestimable misfortune which will come upon thousands, if he retires from the political stage. The Duke adheres to his purpose of entering a convent. Then the shrewd prelate conjures up before his eyes the picture of Eugenie in her moral and spiritual greatness, and begs him to let her live on in him, as a high ideal, protecting him from meanness, vice, and vanity, and thus, to give her "an indestructible life that no power can take away." The resurrection of Eugenie in the spirit electrifies the pain-benumbed father:

Bleibe mir, du vielgeliebtes Bild,
Vollkommen, ewig jung und ewig gleich!
Laß deiner klaren Augen reines Licht
Mich immerfort umglänzen! Schwebe vor,
Wohin ich wandle, zeige mir den Weg
Durch dieser Erde Dornenlabyrinth!
Du bist kein Traumbild, wie ich dich erblicke;
Du warst, du bist. Die Gottheit hatte dich
Vollendet einst gedacht und dargestellt;
So bist du teilhaft des Unendlichen,
Des Ewigen, und bist auf ewig mein.*

In view of such a passage one feels inclined to ask astonished: How was it possible that this poem should have been

* Well-beloved image, be for aye
Perfection's model, let thy youth ne'er fade!
And may the light serene of thy clear eyes
Forever shine for me! Whate'er I do,
Be thou my guide, point out the way for me
Through all this world's long labyrinth of thorns!
Before me here no phantom I behold;
Thou wast, thou art. Since once in days gone by
God fancied thee and pictured thee complete,
Thou now in the eternal-infinite
Dost have a share, and art forever mine.

called, not merely "smooth as marble"—which may be allowed—but also "cold as marble"? Well and good, if this passage were exceptional. But the whole play is permeated with the same deep, warm feeling. As a matter of fact, we know of no one of Goethe's writings that surpasses it in warmth of feeling, albeit this feeling is not always poured out in such passionate words as in *Werther*. Even the colder, calculating natures, even the Secretary, who acts according to the maxim, "What is useful for us is our highest right," Goethe has endowed with a goodly portion of sentiment.

From the greatest of Goethe's contemporaries the play received the highest recognition. After the first performance Karl August wrote to the poet: "Thou shalt be praised and exalted for the strength of thy loins." Herder called it a beautiful fruit, which had quietly ripened under the influence of the greatest event of all time. Schiller remarked very fittingly: "It is all art, and yet, at the same time, it moves our inmost being through the power of truth." Fichte was the most enthusiastic admirer of all. He preferred it to all of the poet's other works, much as he admired these. He called it "the supreme masterpiece of the master; clear as light, and just as inscrutable, all its factors entering into each of its parts, forming a combination of absolute unity, at the same time, like light, radiating to the infinite." These laudatory criticisms were, however, in no wise seconded by the great mass of the educated—not to speak of the lower strata—and on the stage it has never gained a footing.

This failure to receive general recognition is not to be charged alone to the pompous splendour of the language and to the delicate, and for the superficial observer indistinct, delineation of the characters; there are other more valid reasons. One of them is to be found in the fragmentary character of the work. The action loses itself in the sand. Taking into consideration merely what has been fully elaborated, it is scarcely possible to divine what will be the fate of the chief personages. This fragmentariness

has in itself a laming effect upon our interest, but the poet has made the general impression still more unsatisfactory by drawing out the ending to a disproportionate length. He divides it between two acts. For these he has three motives at his disposal; two of greater importance—Eugenie's attempts to save herself by the aid of others, and her marriage with the Judge—and one of minor significance, her apprehension of the dark future of her native country. Of these only the second admitted of a very broad treatment. The first, on the contrary, at least in the form in which Goethe made use of it, and likewise the third, demanded the very briefest treatment. Instead of this there is devoted to the third, for which a few verses would have sufficed, a whole long scene, which, in a roundabout way, comes to a simple end. The first, occupying almost the whole of the fifth act, carries us through a chain of dialogues, which time after time bring to our consciousness what we have known ever since the beginning of the fourth act, when the royal command is made known, namely, that Eugenie is irrevocably surrendered to the will of the Governess. To be sure, the poet might have deceived our expectations. He might have had those appealed to for aid—the people, the Governor, the Abbess—make earnest attempts to resist the royal command. But what happens? So soon as the Governess shows the paper, the Governor and the Abbess vanish with almost comical haste, while the people remain in gaping inactivity. This fruitless treatment and unvarying repetition of the motive is not only extremely wearisome; it runs exactly counter to the purposes which the poet was pursuing in the drama.

This brings us to a point of view which we have not as yet assumed toward the play, and which will explain to us for the most part the disfavour with which it has met. Is that part of *Die natürliche Tochter* which we possess the first section of the great world-picture which Goethe's trilogy was to contain? No one will answer this question in the affirmative, for all the essential features of such a picture are lacking. Where in the play do we find any evidences

of the far-reaching, violent conflicts which overthrew the old régime? Where of the awful, deep-seated diseases from which the French body politic was suffering? Where do we hear anything about the antagonism between king and people, between privileged and oppressed classes, between wealth and poverty, between stupid ecclesiasticism and atheistic materialism, between the over-education of the few and the stolid ignorance of the many? Where do we see the frivolity and prodigality of the Court, the venality of offices and officers, the financial distress of the state, the system of extortionate taxation, the disregard of the constitution, the burdens of tithe and soccage, the ruinous mortmain, the severity of serfdom, the devastations of aristocratic lovers of the chase, and hundreds of other heaven-crying grievances, which caused the revolution to break out as a natural reaction? And where are the traces of the fermentation which is soon to result in violence? Where are the agitators of the type of Mirabeau and Sieyès? Where the clever salons, in which the radical and nihilistic slogans were invented? In short, where is there even a gleam of the mighty intellectual upheaval which France experienced before the revolution? To be sure, we often hear of a "violent fermentation," but we see nothing of it. We see, rather, the opposite. Everybody submits calmly and quickly to the commands of the King. Not a hand is raised to protect Eugenie, who is to be illegally deported, the victim of a plot in no wise connected with politics. The King is a noble man, who would gladly bring happiness to the lowest hovel; his uncle is everybody's friend and very popular. The kingdom is quiet and well governed. Nobody has a grievance to bear. A few intriguers, such as are to be found at the best court and in the best kingdom, do not alter this picture in the least. If, then, there is anything that is left indistinct in the play, it is the condition of affairs in the kingdom. Any other Catholic country of modern times might just as well be thought of as that between the Ardennes and the Pyrenees in the ninth decade of the eighteenth century.

How the revolution can come out of such a *milieu* is an enigma. The play is a failure, if considered as the introduction to a great poem reflecting the revolution. One who takes it up expecting to find it such, and prepared to judge it accordingly, is destined to lay it down with deep disappointment. Perhaps in the later parts of the trilogy Goethe would have made up for what he neglected in the first. Among his posthumous papers were found plans which give us some idea of the projected second part.

The Governess, who fled from the Duke for fear of him, as he is told, has returned to the capital city, and receives from the tender-hearted man rich presents for the painstaking care which she took of the supposedly deceased Eugenie during her last days. The Secretary, on the other hand does not yet bestow upon her the promised reward of marriage. He wishes first to wait and see what is to be his position in the new epoch about to be ushered in. The estrangement between the Duke and the King is renewed and intensified; hence also that between the Duke and the Count, as the latter is a declared partisan of the King. Thus the first act of the second part comes to an end, and we are still at the very earliest dawn of the revolution.

Nor does the second act carry us much further. We are transported to the Judge's country-seat. The unsatisfactoriness of the peculiar marriage upon a sisterly basis, as stipulated by Eugenie, is made clear to us. In the course of the long conversation between husband and wife politics is among the things touched upon. The Judge hopes the best from the new movement now manifesting itself; Eugenie is sceptical. The discussion resolves itself into an exchange of tender affection, which is interrupted by the arrival of guests. A lawyer, a soldier, and a craftsman come to visit the Judge and to consult with him concerning the liberation of the oppressed people. In the course of the discussion a difference of opinion arises, and the meeting closes without any definite result. In speaking to Eugenie, who was not present at the meeting, the Judge asserts that he still has hopes of an agreement, couching his statements in general

terms that reveal nothing of his real political aims. The conversation returns again to their relation to one another. From Eugenie's new and more cordial declarations the Judge learns with pleasure that the time is near when she will become his wife in reality. This gives him a still stronger desire to be worthy of her, and he hopes that he may best become so by constituting himself a fully devoted champion of the cause of the people. He pictures to his wife the lofty and honourable career opening before him in this direction. Eugenie is horrified. Understanding now for the first time the true purpose of the meeting, she declares that she can grant him her love only on condition that he renounce the party of the agitators. In the soul of the Judge there ensues a violent conflict between political conviction and passion, and in the end the victory is won by what seems to him the plain call of duty and conscience. He parts from Eugenie in deep sorrow. She, on her part, recognising the nearness of the danger, has no other thought than of going to the capital and devoting her strength to the fight for the kingdom.

In the third act we find her there; but from the meagre scenic indications we are unable fully to determine what course this act and the fourth were intended to take. Only thus much is clear, that the revolution has meanwhile broken out. In the fifth act, for which we again have fuller notes, those personages of the play who belong to the privileged estates are already in prison. Their conversations concerning the past, the present, and the future, of which the chief elements were to be longing, fear, despair, regret, mutual reproaches, and finally a general raving over the vanished Eugenie, fill no less than four scenes. The moment that the prisoners unite in praise of Eugenie she appears among them,* and, probably through the intervention of the Craftsman, who joins them in the final scene, obtains a reprieve of the sentence pronounced upon them.

In the third part, of which we have but a very meagre

* *Cf.* the scenario, *W.*, x., 445.

sketch,* we see the Judge and his friends—the Lawyer, the Craftsman, and the Soldier—constantly in action, and Eugenie frequently among them. Further than this we are told nothing except that in a moment of extreme confusion a sonnet is found which Eugenie, shortly before her elevation to the rank of a princess of the blood, had locked up in a secret closet. In this sonnet she had paid her most heartfelt homage to the King, and, while it does not bring about a rescue, it does at least produce a beautiful moment.

A consideration of this sketch of the plot of the second and third parts of the trilogy will hardly fail to convince one that even they would have given but a very imperfect picture of the revolutionary epoch in the history of France. They, too, would have treated predominantly purely human affairs, such as conflicts between man and wife, father and daughter, and near relatives, instead of those between great principles and great masses. No scenes among the common people, in parliament, or in clubs; no street battles, no solemn ceremonies, such as, for example, the celebration of the storming of the Bastille would have demanded, even such as *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch* offered; no correlation of domestic with foreign politics; in short, neither in events nor in persons a single suggestion of that epoch so important in the world's history. Even if one were convinced that what we miss would have found its place in the scenes of the second part, of which we have merely a preliminary sketch, and in the almost unknown third part, the disproportionate subordination of the historical and political elements to personal and family interests would have remained. It is very characteristic that the most important personality in the great picture of the revolution should be a woman (as was the case in *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch*), and that in the third part—that is to say, in a period of time when the state and society, religion and property, were at stake, and heads were daily falling by the dozen—the finding of a sonnet should produce a dramatic

* *Cf. the scenario, W.*, x., 445.

climax, upon which the poet years afterward delighted to dwell.

We find ourselves face to face with the peculiar fac that every attempt which the poet made to embody in artistic form this most important historical event of his lifetime, was marked by failure.[25] He gave expression to his own conviction of the truthfulness of this statement in 1822, in the words: "When I look back over the many years, I see clearly how my attraction to this incomprehensible subject consumed all my poetic power for so long a time, and almost to no purpose." But he never did arrive at a clear understanding of the causes of his failure. He ascribed it now to this, now to that accidental circumstance. The chief cause really lay in the fact that he was antagonistic toward the revolution. The attempt has been made to explain this antagonism as the result of his conservative aristocratism. This is, however, a superficial and one-sided interpretation. Such catchwords rarely throw much light on Goethe's nature, and never characterise him adequately. It must be admitted that he did not understand the later developments of the movement, but it must be denied that he had no understanding of its origin and inward justification. Very few had as clear ideas on this point as he. He certainly knew enough about France from his Strasburg days, and he certainly had learned from ample experience in his own country what great wrongs are brought about by an absolute government, an antiquated order of estates, and inherited privileges, even when the favoured classes evince the best intentions. More than one bitter utterance on this topic escaped his lips in his hours of vexation. "The curse, that we are to consume the marrow of the land, allows no blessing of comfort to grow" (April 3, 1782). "The poor common people always have to carry the sack, and it matters little whether it gets too heavy for them on the right side or on the left" (June 20, 1784). "I see the peasant exacting from the earth the necessaries of life, which would truly afford him a comfortable existence if he only sweated for himself. But you know that when the

plant lice sit on the rose branches and suck till they are very fat and green, along come the ants and suck the filtered sap out of their bodies. And so it goes on and on; we have advanced so far that at the top there is always more consumed in a day than can be produced in a day at the bottom" (April 17, 1782). Neither did Goethe, with his straightforward nature, hesitate to make known his sympathy with the complaints of the leaders of French opinion. In the *Venezianische Epigramme* he calls out to the conservatives in Germany the memorable words:

Jene Menſchen ſind toll, ſo ſagt Ihr von heftigen Sprechern,
Die wir in Frankreich laut hören auf Straßen und Markt.
Mir auch ſcheinen ſie toll; doch redet ein Toller in Freiheit
Weiſe Sprüche, wenn ach! Weisheit im Sklaven verſtummt.*

In *Die Aufgeregten* he makes the Countess, who has returned from Paris, say: "Since I have observed how injustice accumulates so easily from generation to generation, how magnanimous actions are for the most part purely personal, and selfishness alone is, as it were, transmissible; since I have seen with my own eyes that human nature may be oppressed and delayed to an incredible degree, but cannot be suppressed or destroyed, I have firmly resolved that I myself shall strictly eschew every single action which seems to me unjust, and, among my own kindred, in society, at Court, and in the city, shall proclaim aloud my opinion of such actions." At that time, too, the verses in *Faust* about the curse of dead laws, and about the disregarded rights of the living generation, were already composed, and even printed. In general he was completely convinced of the fact that great revolutions are never the fault of the governed, but always of those who govern. It was one thing, however, to justify the complaints concerning the evil conditions in France, and an entirely different thing to

* "Aye, but those men are mad"; so say you of violent speakers,
Such as we hear in France shouting in markets and streets.
Mad they surely appear; but a mad man in freedom will utter
Words that are wise, while, alas! wisdom is dumb in the slave.

approve of the means chosen by the opposition to remedy them.

It is here by no means a question of the application of compulsion and violence, of rebellion and murder. The very fact that the historical structure was, as it were, erased from the tablet with a sponge, and in its stead a new building was designed according to abstract general principles, seemed to Goethe absurd in the highest degree. What Hegel, in his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, praised in the new formation of the French state—in the words: "On the idea of right a new constitution was erected, and from now on everything is to be based on this foundation. So long as the sun has shone in the firmament and the planets have revolved about it, man has never before been known to stand on his head, that is to say, on his ideas, and build reality in accordance with them"—was the very thing that terrified the poet, who had learned, as a statesman, that political structures, capable of enduring, flourish and develop only upon a real, living foundation, and not upon one of ideas. From the same point of view he was thoroughly in accord with the imperial ratification decree of April 30, 1793, that it is wholly contrary to nature "to wish to force the whole human race to be of one mind concerning the choice of the ways and means to obtain civic happiness."

If political reforms in accordance with general doctrines were in themselves dubious, indeed dangerous, how much more so they must have been when the execution of them was intrusted to inexperienced and, still worse, unclean hands! Such was the state of affairs which he now saw in France, as he had often observed in history in connection with similar movements. Who were the leaders? At first bombastic theorisers, then egoists with well defined aims, or a combination of both, and in the end nothing but unscrupulous, glory-and-power-seeking demagogues.

Jeglichen Schwärmer ſchlagt mir ans Kreuz im dreißigſten Jahre;
Kennt er nur einmal die Welt, wird der Betrogne der Schelm.

Alle Freiheitsapoſtel, ſie waren mir immer zuwieder;
Willkür ſuchte doch nur jeder am Ende für ſich.*

In the fight for liberty, equality, and fraternity, "the crowd became the tyrant of the crowd." In the place of "reasonable" law, brutal violence reigned. "They have robbed and destroyed; that is the spirit of the times." "Liberty and equality can be enjoyed only in the intoxication of frenzy." The movement had begun with the fight against the unjust; it ended with the fight against the just. "The Jacobins thirst for the blood of every righteous man."

What embittered the poet still more against the revolution—in fact hardened his heart completely against it—was the reflex influence which it had on Germany. In the German Empire, in political as well as in religious matters, there had grown up a certain pardonable freedom of thought and action, of the press and of speech. In individual countries, even in petty states, practical efforts were being made to remove a number of grievances that had come down from the feudal system. In Weimar Goethe himself had laboured manfully, and the Duke and his councillors were carrying on the work. Then came the events of the revolution and reforms were everywhere checked, the accustomed greater freedom of movement suppressed, and the effort made to fix existing conditions, or, better still, to force them to retrograde. People became nervous and apprehensive, and were everywhere on the lookout for Jacobinism, and offence to throne and altar.

"Affairs in France," wrote Goethe's efficient colleague, Privy Councillor Voigt, on the 28th of July, 1792, "will retard freedom of thought and of the press for many years in Germany. Every prince and lord is on the alert, and will at once refuse to allow anything to come up that seems to be injurious to established religion and political sub-

* Crucify ev'ry fanatic ere yet his years become thirty;
Once they the world understand, dupes are transformed into rogues.
Freedom's apostles to me were ever a source of vexation;
Each in the end but desires licence to do what he will.

mission." When, as in the case of Weimar, there were at the head of the government princes and ministers who were not affected by the general alarm, and who desired to continue along the way they had been following, then the neighbours would come and urge this state to take measures against unbelief and Jacobinism. Hardly had the jurist Hufeland announced a lecture in Jena on the French constitution, when the Electorate of Saxony began to complain about it. The same Electorate trembled before Fichte, as did also Gotha, one of the patron states of the University. *Die Jenaische allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, which contributed to the prominence of the University and aided in retaining distinguished professors by the added income which it afforded them as contributors,* was forbidden in Prussia. Among the students the spirit of rebellion was rife, and when fifty soldiers were sent to Jena to preserve order, the whole student body migrated to Erfurt (July 14, 1792).

One can well imagine how these and other similar things must have pained Goethe, to whom the University was as a carefully nurtured, favourite child, and how they must have aroused his anger at the revolution, which was disturbing to such an extent the quiet, prosperous development of his own little section. Then, as though to fill the measure of his vexation to the full, his nearest and most highly educated friends, Herder, Knebel, Wieland, and others, who had enjoyed the greatest bounties from the ducal house, went over to the side of the revolution. Goethe took all of these things very tragically. He asked himself: What do these people want? Can they substitute for the conditions that have hitherto obtained in Weimar anything that will be in the slightest degree better? Is it not sheer madness for them to carry into this country the germs of disintegration, and to undermine their own existence as well as that of their friends, and the welfare of the whole country? Goethe found that a

* It paid fifteen thalers the sheet honorarium. *Cf.* Reichlin-Meldegg, *Paulus*, i., 191.

tone of insubordination had already been assumed, not only by the students, which might have been passed over more lightly, but also by the officials. It was enough to make him unhappy, that even friendly relations had been destroyed by the difference of political opinions, by the "unholy, ghastly spirit of partisanship." Must this spirit of partisanship devastate his cherished home life also?

Goethe later excused his antagonistic attitude toward the revolution by saying that at the time its beneficent results were not yet to be foreseen. They were not to be foreseen, it is true; but they were to be hoped for, and a man of his keen and profound penetration might have been expected to recognise beyond all the reactions, disappointments, confusions, and horrors, the great blessings which were latent in the revolution, and must therefore of necessity manifest themselves in the course of time. There were minds of much smaller calibre that recognised them. Reinhard, who in his youth was Schiller's friend, and in his old age a friend of Goethe, had been an eye-witness of the many terrible things that had occurred in Paris up to November, 1791, and yet he declared the revolution to be a gigantic stride in the progress of the human mind, and asked whether, even if France should be sacrificed in the fight, "that was any reason for believing that the principles of equality could not be transplanted to more receptive regions. In the churches of Jerusalem no prayers are now intoned except those of the Koran, but all Europe has sworn allegiance to the Cross."

Why did not Goethe also allow himself to be filled with this faith and these hopes? The answer lies in the fact that in the political realm he was a pronounced realist. Here he allowed himself to be convinced only by what was immediately visible and demonstrable, just as he grasped only what could be immediately translated into reality, what he could calculate from actual given facts. Likewise as a practical man he had lost all confidence in the ability of the common people to help themselves and to make a sensible use of a larger measure of liberties. In any case, ruling,

according to an axiom in which he believed till the end of his life, should be left exclusively to experts. For, as he said, it is an art, and, just as any other art, has to be learned. He had forgotten that he himself had once taken up the task of ruling without any previous experience in the routine of government, and yet had met with greater success than his senior colleagues. He also overlooked the fact that liberties which cannot be abused are of no value, and that man in a state of freedom quickly matures to their right use. He also had as a practical man too little appreciation of the moral significance of general constitutional principles, and too little appreciation of the value of enthusiasm for political ideas. He did not in general take very kindly to the thought that ideas penetrate the masses, and that history represents the development of ideas among the masses. It was his idea that all progress was dependent upon the pains and labours of eminent individual men, while the great crowd rubbed against one another without aim or ideal. And so to him history resolved itself into the presentation of the deeds of heroes; and he declared that what is usually called history is a fabric of nonsense, a mass of follies and villainies, from which nothing can be learned.

Improvement, not overthrow, of existing things—reform, not revolution—was his further principle, and in so far he failed to recognise the fact that at times buildings are so ready to tumble down, or are so wrongly constructed, that nothing short of rebuilding from the very foundation can produce anything of use.

On the other hand, as a result of his Italian journey in the nineties, he had placed such a one-sided valuation on esthetic, scientific culture, that he would have opposed a reformation of the spirit, if this were to disturb the quiet work of the spirit. And in Germany, divided in feeling and drawn into discord and strife, where was any interest in science, art, and literature to come from, where any interest in moral and esthetic self-culture? Where was his ideal, that the individual should fashion himself as nearly

as possible into a perfect personality; where his hope, that out of individual progress would develop the progress of the race as a whole, more beautifully and more certainly than it could ever be developed by clauses in constitutions, paragraphs of law, and all the arts of administrative government?

> Franztum drängt in dieſen verworrenen Tagen, wie ehmals
> Luthertum es getan, ruhige Bildung zurück.*

This epigram calls for very serious thought. Does it imply that the reformation is to be lamented, because it disturbed the peaceful growth of culture? Was not the most important feature of the reformation the fact that it cleared the way for geniune, fruitful culture—even though it was accompanied by some disturbance? Did Goethe, who lived in such close communion with nature, not see that the approach of spring is marked by storms, which break off limbs that are dead and decayed, and many a green branch besides? Had he forgotten, that he himself had once aroused a storm, that spring might come in German intellectual life? But, now that spring had gone by and summer was here, it was natural for him to desire that the harvest should ripen in peace.

This desire, together with a lack of political idealism, caused Goethe in a later important epoch again to retire to regions where he was sheltered from the storms of political agitation. We can understand how, with such a turn of mind, it was impossible for him to discover any good in the revolution, much less to ascribe to it any such significance in the world's history as he had on the evening of the bombardment of Valmy, when that sudden inspiration flashed through his mind and then, like a flash, was gone for ever. On the contrary, he heaped resentment upon resentment in his bosom against the terrible event, and took the greatest satisfaction in unburdening himself of this resentment in his poetry.

Hence his poetry, which had at other times reflected the

* French propagandists to-day, as Luther's adherents aforetime,
Spreading confusion and strife, peaceful culture retard.

world so clearly and faithfully, became in this instance a distorting concave mirror. The great world-event became a horrid, grotesque, inexplicable phenomenon. If he had fully comprehended it in its deep significance, he would have discovered in it a magnificent, serious movement, that would have appealed to his sympathies, and would have condemned the plots and tendencies of the works in which he sought to mirror the times. This is doubtless the real, secret reason—of which he himself, of course, was unconscious—why he made no attempt to portray political conditions, not even in *Die natürliche Tochter*, which was intended to be a comprehensive picture. Another natural consequence of his general attitude was the fact that, barring isolated exceptions, he chose as representatives of the revolutionary ideas vain, unbalanced, low, violent, selfish pleasure-seekers. Every act is a manifestation of a very personal, ephemeral, accidental passion, with no thought of the nation nor of the future, so that the whole is lacking in historical colour. This effect is still further strengthened by the fact that even the good characters are influenced in their actions more by purely human than by definite, far-seeing, political motives. Herein Goethe's poetical inclinations coincided with his philosophical and scientific views. "What is the universal? The individual case." When the historian Luden once spoke to him of the fate of humanity, he replied: "Humanity? That is an abstraction. There have been men and men only in the past, and there will be men and men only in the future." This mental makeup of the poet, which seeks and represents everything in the individual, explains why he here crowds the masses, whom he had so successfully brought on the stage in *Egmont*, almost entirely into the background. He was, to borrow his own expression, "surfeited to the point of loathing with gross scenes in the market-places and among the populace."

In this way his works dealing with the revolution failed to reflect the movement. They also failed in another respect. Some of them, such as *Der Gross-Cophta* and *Der Bürgergeneral*, turned out to be insignificant; others

were never completed. Many things conspired to bring this about. *Der Gross-Cophta* was the recasting of a libretto; *Der Bürgergeneral* suffered from hasty composition and temporary consideration for certain actors; *Die Aufgeregten* and *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch* revealed his own unrest and the fact that he did not keep abreast with events; but the chief cause in every case was the fact that the poet's self was nowhere to be found in them. Whatever was not part and parcel of his inmost being, whatever was not a transformation of some subjective experience that aroused his emotions, was condemned to become a "factory product," or remain a fragment.

VI

GOETHE AND PHILOSOPHY

Goethe a Spinozist—His earlier attitude toward the Dutch philosopher—His views in common with Spinoza—Unity and divinity of the universe and all existence—Determinism—Necessity in art—"Existence and perfection are one"—No final causes—No absolute good or absolute bad—Happiness means preservation of individuality—Renunciation—Resignation—Goethe a wise man, according to Spinoza—His love toward man—Method of overcoming passions—Intuitive knowledge—Unselfish love toward God—Spinoza supplemented by Leibnitz—Individualistic idea of immortality—Goethe's study of Kant—What he receives from Kant—Remains a Spinozist, in spite of Kant—Kant's ethics—His theory of knowledge—Goethe seeks Spinozism in Kant — Fichte — Schelling — Hegel — The way prepared for Goethe's friendship with Schiller.

EVERY man's philosophy is part and parcel of his nature. No man allows views to be forced upon him which are foreign to his inner self. Hence it follows that no man ever really accepts a new philosophy of the world; he merely experiences a rising into consciousness, a confirmation, a corroboration, a clarification, an extension of what is already present in his soul. If this be true of the ordinary man, how much the more so of a profound and original spirit such as Goethe! If one were to select a short name to characterise his philosophy, one would say that he was a Spinozist. He was a Spinozist even before he knew anything about Spinoza.[26]

Als Knab' und Jüngling kniet er ſchon
Im Tempel vor der Göttin Thron.*

To him nature was the Deity. As a boy he believed

* Ere boyhood years or youth had flown
He knelt before the goddess' throne.

also in an extramundane, personal God, but in his later youth this belief began to lose its hold upon him. At the age of twenty he noted in his diary: "To treat of God and nature separately is difficult and dangerous; for we know God only through nature. All that is belongs necessarily to the essence of God, since God is the only thing that exists." However, when he wrote this confession, which coincides so nearly with the teaching of Spinoza, the concluding sentences of which, in fact, reproduce the gist of Spinoza's doctrine, he still abhorred the Dutch philosopher, whom he at that time knew only from the distorted picture of him in Bayle's *Dictionnaire*. When he went back to the sources in the summer of 1773 he was filled with great enthusiasm for the man and his teachings, and from that time on his attitude toward him never changed. Henceforth Spinoza always afforded a new attraction for him, becoming his "refuge" in times of unrest and depression, his constant companion on his travels, his "lord and master." Late in life Goethe characterised the "extraordinary man" as the one who, along with Linné and Shakespeare, had exerted the greatest influence upon him.

Goethe entertained three fundamental views in common with Spinoza: the conceptions of the unity, the divinity, and the determination by necessity of the universe and all being. The unity and divinity of the world did not need to be proved to him; he felt them and saw them. The holy, inner, glowing life of nature revealed itself to him directly. He saw the inscrutable forces in the depths of the earth working together to create. The glorious formations of the infinite world moved all-living in his soul. When he saw the innumerable creatures, his brethren, passing by in the quiet bush, in the air, and in the water, he felt also the presence of the Almighty, the approach of the All-loving One, and he then understood his soul as the mirror of the infinite God. Thus in himself he was assured of the unity of nature and God. In this respect he was also the perfect incarnation of the Storm-and-Stress movement, of which Spinoza naturally became the philosopher. He was justified

in saying that it was his inborn way of viewing things, the very foundation of his whole existence, to see God in nature and nature in God (*Annalen, 1811*, written in 1823, or sometime during the two following years). Since, then, the divine reveals itself everywhere, but reaches self-consciousness only in man, and that too in every man, albeit in varying degrees, according to the individual, it was logical for Goethe to consider "the words of man the words of God" (letter to Pfenninger, April 26, 1774). "And a deity spoke when I thought to speak, and when I thought a deity was speaking I spoke myself" (*Prometheus*, ll. 110, ff.).* "As sons of God we worship him in ourselves and in all his children" (letter to Lavater, June 22, 1781). "I spoke not of her [Nature]. No, what is true and what is false, she hath spoken it all" (*Die Natur*, 1783). "The more thou hast the feeling of being a man, the more thou art like unto the gods" (*Zahme Xenien*, No. 260). And thus in the end reverence for himself became for him the highest type of reverence.

To Goethe, as to every one who believes in the identity of God and the universe, the Deity necessarily meant something wholly impersonal, often though a remnant of child-like feeling may have led him to speak of the Divine Essence as a personal being. Both as a poet and as a man he was forced to use such language, because of the inadequacy of speech conceptions to designate the Universe-Deity, as he maintains with glowing enthusiasm in *Faust* [ll. 3431–3458]. Even Spinoza himself speaks of the decrees of the voice of God. The conception of God as a person is so far removed from Goethe's thought that he agrees with Spinoza in considering such a thing a lowering of God's dignity. In this respect he even believes himself in harmony with the Bible, or at least with the New Testament and especially with Christ. To the above-cited confession of 1770 he added that it did not contradict the Holy Scriptures, and he declared

* "When we say that the human mind perceives this or that thing, we say nothing else than that God has this or that idea."—Spinoza, *Ethics*, ii., 11.

to Lavater in 1774 that nobody had ever expressed himself concerning the Deity so much like the Saviour as did Spinoza. When Fritz Jacobi, in his essay *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*, called Spinoza an atheist, Goethe said very emphatically that he considered him a man of firmest belief in God (*theissimus*) and of truest Christianity. When, however, the separation of God from nature was given out as Christianity he always flew to arms and preferred to join forces with the heathen and to cry out with the Ephesian goldsmith: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Whoever, with Goethe and Spinoza, looks upon God and nature as one, and at the same time recognises in nature an order subject to eternal laws, must also accept the third fundamental principle of pantheistic philosophy, namely, the doctrine of necessity. Strictly speaking, the pantheists look upon necessity as divine reason itself, which deserves to be called divine because it acts in accordance with eternal, unchangeable laws inherent in the nature of God, that is to say, in accordance with absolute truth and wisdom. One would have to ascribe to God the possibility of acting contrary to reason, if one were to eliminate necessity from the existence and order of the world. As a result of this divine necessity, which rules the world, and which Goethe, under the first impression of his study of Spinoza, symbolised magnificently in *Prometheus*, there cannot be in the realm of the human any freedom of the will[27] in the sense of absolute caprice. Goethe's mind was clear on this point early in life. Even as early as 1771, in *Zum Shäkespears Tag*, he speaks of the "pretended freedom of our wills." Here, too, enlightenment came to him from within his own bosom. He felt his life to be thoroughly determined, that he was subjected to a compelling force in all his being, and in all that he did, as well as in all that he left undone. "As if lashed by invisible spirits, the sun-steeds of time are running away with the light chariot of our fate," he says in *Egmont*, and similarly in the *Urfaust:* "For thou art right, chiefly because I must." "One obeys the laws of nature, even when one resists them; one works with her, even when one intends

to work against her" (*Die Natur*, 1783). "According to the law by which thou hast come hither, thus must thou be, thou canst not escape thyself." "Condition and law and all volition is merely a willing because it has been so decreed, and in the presence of will caprice keeps silent."

Doch im Innern ſcheint ein Geiſt gewaltig zu ringen,
Wie er durchbräche den Kreis, Willkür zu ſchaffen den Formen
Wie dem Wollen; doch was er beginnt, beginnt er vergebens.*
Metamorphose der Tiere.

When Goethe turned to the theory of colours he explained: "I have again been led by the spirit into a field which I did not intend to enter, just as was the prophet with the jam-pot." This pronounced element of necessity in his nature was so evident to others that Fritz Jacobi declared him to be as one possessed, who almost never had any choice as to what he should do. The same thing is involved in the conception of the demonic. Schiller, too, recognised clearly that it was impossible for Goethe to be anything but a Spinozist, that it would even mean the destruction of his beautiful naïve nature, if he were to become a libertarian. It was certainly for this reason that he told Goethe he would find nothing in Kant, and advised him against studying Kant's philosophy.

Nowhere did Goethe see such a revelation of the law of necessity as in the very sphere wherein we are accustomed to behold man's greatest liberty,—in art. Here necessity seemed to him the more obvious, the more perfect the work of art. In inferior products there is caprice, that is to say, an imperfect apprehension of and feeling for the divine in nature and in us; in higher works, on the other hand, the impossibility of varying from the divine is obvious, when apprehension and feeling are adequate. "Here all caprice, all presumption falls to the ground; here is necessity, God." "Here God-Nature works in us. We all unconsciously cherish this belief. If we wish to give the highest praise to a great work of art, we say we have the feeling that it is

* Yet, it appears, a spirit within doth mightily wrestle,
Striving the circle to break, and forms to endow with discretion,
E'en as the will; but, strive as it may, its strife is still idle.

as it is by necessity." Thus Goethe looked upon his indwelling poetic talent "as simply nature," and, in order to make this point of view comprehensible, gave as an introduction to the sixteenth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* a presentation of the Spinozist doctrine of necessity.

From the perfection of the Deity working according to eternal laws it follows, according to Spinoza, that existence must also be perfect. Goethe accepted this doctrine without reserve. "Existence and perfection are one," is the beginning of an essay which he wrote in the years 1784 to 1786. By this hypothesis Spinoza eliminates from the world all ultimate purposes or final causes. For, since all that is has its necessary source in the nature of God and comes into being perfect, a definite purpose cannot be the cause of the world or the object of its existence. This appealed to Goethe with especial force. Final causes had been a source of great annoyance to him. The theology and philosophy, as well as the speculative writings on art and nature, of the eighteenth century abounded in the most insipid application of them. Everything was subordinated to the teleological ideas of usefulness and adaptation, that is to say, to the short-sighted conceptions, in accordance with which man, as was natural in his then state of knowledge, interpreted the inter-relations and the purposiveness of phenomena. By this narrow, arbitrary conception of design men determined the cause and the nature of a thing, and measured its value, even its individual right to existence. Such a view could not satisfy Goethe in any field, least of all in the fields of art and nature. He called it "absurd," and late in life thanked Spinoza for having early confirmed him in his aversion for it. To Goethe every work of nature and art is an end in itself and bears its perfection in itself. "Every beast is an end in itself and springs perfect from the bosom of nature," we read in the *Metamorphose der Tiere*. Of works of art Goethe says: "We fight for the perfection of a work of art in and of itself. They [our opponents] think of the influence it will exert, a thing to which the true artist gives no more thought

than does nature when she produces a lion or a hummingbird." Nature and art are too great, he says, to be occupied with purposes; and they have no need to be, for there are relations everywhere, and relations are life (letter to Zelter, January 29, 1830).

Through the conception of design the conceptions of perfection and imperfection have been applied to the world, giving rise to the legal standards of perfect and imperfect, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, sin and merit. But, leaving aside for the moment the necessity and perfection in the world-order, and viewing the world from the narrow, human standpoint, a thing or an action is not good or bad in itself, but only through the relation in which it is considered. Hence one and the same thing may be called either good or bad. In these views Goethe was completely in harmony with Spinoza. The Storm-and-Stress movement, of which he was one of the chief instigators, was avowedly a rebellion against the traditional esthetic and moral standards of the world, and a return to nature, which knows neither good nor bad, but considers that everything has its justification. Hence the most pregnant expression of the Storm-and-Stress period, *Werthers Leiden*, became a unique protest against the reduction of all human actions to the usual categories. For since men do not take things as they are in themselves, but measure their value and nature by subjective standards, this gives rise to misunderstandings, errors, and disputes. So it is not real things that separate men into opposing parties; it is the subjective notions of things, *imaginationes*, as Spinoza called them, or, as Bacon said, *eidola*, illusions. This idea often afforded Goethe peace of mind. Whenever he met with opposition or obduracy toward the truth and the like, he thought to himself, "That is probably another *eidol*," and let it go.

But how is one to attain to happiness in life in this world of divine necessity and human confusion? Spinoza once said that man's happiness consisted in his being able to preserve his being in accordance with the laws of his own

nature, which means, translated into the words of Goethe: "The highest happiness of the children of this world is to be found only in personality." At once the question arises, how does one preserve his being, his personality? Is it by yielding to blind animal passion and appropriating to one's self everything that satisfies the personal longings of the moment? Does not man in the midst of enjoyment languish with desire? And does he not in the satisfying of his own needs meet with opposition from others, and is not his being stunted, rather than developed, by this, destroyed, rather than preserved? When such an effect is brought about there follows a compromise with the world, a dull, listless life, or a pessimism to which everything in this beautiful, most real world seems vanity. Then we simply give up the preservation of a personality, or coldly masquerade in the simulation of one. How then shall we in reality preserve our being? "Every being," answers Spinoza, "is preserved only by the laws which are essential to it." These laws are none other than the laws of reason, which is only a part of the divine reason. If then we would really preserve our being, it must be our endeavour to discern the divine reason which rules in the natural order of the world. Then we shall seek to acquire only that which has true value in this natural order, that which contains true being, enduring good, not what belongs to appearances, to the moment, and still less what violates the laws of reason. "I should like," wrote Goethe from Italy, "to occupy myself solely with relations that are enduring, and thus, according to Spinoza, to win eternity for my spirit." This living according to the known dictates of divine reason, this sole devotion to the things of the world that have enduring value, involves more than a renunciation of the temporary pleasure afforded by yielding to fleeting, transitory desires, to our passions; for a being which can find its preservation only in the accomplishment of the highest tasks it very often means also a renunciation of one's share in the movements of the times, a renunciation of influence, and of applause, in the present. This culmination of renunciation, upon

which Spinoza had once fixed his gaze, was also the goal of Goethe's striving.

Bitter as such a renunciation may be in the beginning, so much the sweeter does it become as time goes on. Man very soon notices how thoroughly he has been delivered from the whimsical, tyrannical rule of the world and of his own passions, from pains, disappointments, conflicts, and fruitless endeavours—and how he has in return won peace, repose, inward freedom, and capacity for work at eternal things: how, in a word, he has fulfilled all the requirements to enable him to preserve his personality in its noblest and best, its really essential, parts in the whole breadth of its nature, and to unfold and perfect it in its totality, and how he thereby gains the highest feeling of happiness. Clearly as Goethe recognised and, for the time being, felt this happiness of renunciation, nevertheless, being a hot-blooded child of the world and having to remain so in order to be a great poet and pass through error and guilt to wisdom, he again and again allowed himself, even to the last years of his life, to be betrayed into neglecting eternal enjoyment for the pleasures of a season. Yet he always succeeded, and, as time went on, with ever greater quickness and thoroughness, in finding his way back again to the eternal.

Weltſeele, komm, uns zu durchdringen!
Dann mit dem Weltgeiſt ſelbſt zu ringen,
Wird unſerer Kräfte Hochberuf.
Teilnehmend führen gute Geiſter,
Gelinde leitend, höchſte Meiſter,
Zu dem, der alles ſchafft und ſchuf.

Im Grenzenloſen ſich zu finden,
Wird gern der einzelne verſchwinden,
Da löſt ſich aller Überdruß;
Statt heißem Wünſchen, wildem Wollen,
Statt läſt'gem Fordern, ſtrengem Sollen,
Sich aufzugeben, iſt Genuß.*

* Come fill us, spirit all-pervading,
Our wrestle with the world-soul aiding,
Which then shall be our highest call.

In order to yield himself with "holy longing," he flies like a moth into the divine flame, to burn away the earthly, temporal man, and let the man of eternity come into being.

Und ſo lang du das nicht haſt,
Dieſes: Stirb und werde!
Biſt du nur ein trüber Gaſt
Auf der dunklen Erde.*

"I had to yield up my life in order to be" (letter to Schubarth, July 9, 1820).

Von der Gewalt, die alle Weſen bindet,
Befreit der Menſch ſich, der ſich überwindet.†

These are a few of the profound utterances which throw strong light on Goethe's resignation. We shall have further occasion to meet this life motive under a different form and more fully developed.

The resignation which Spinoza demands has nothing monastic about it, it does not turn man away from the world. There are in the world many joys which not only do not hinder, but, so long as they are not an end in themselves, even promote the acquisition of the treasures that endure, or, as Spinoza would say, the knowledge of the Eternal. Such joys call forth feelings of pleasure, and these in part immediately, in part through the medium of the body, enhance the power of the human mind to know God.

True guardian spirits walk beside us,
As highest masters gently guide us
To Him who made and maketh all.

The soul that gladly self effaceth,
For rest in Him who all embraceth,
Will weariness no longer fret.
Not passion, mad determination,
Not irksome call, strict obligation—
Self-yielding 't is will joy beget.

* Till to thee this truth is clear,
Death means higher birth,
Thou art but a stranger here
On this gloomy earth.

† The man who conquers self his freedom gaineth
From that dread power which creatures all constraineth.

"Hence," says Spinoza, "the wise man enjoys things. He derives refreshment from temperate, agreeable food and drink, from the fragrance and beauty of growing plants, from ornaments, athletic contests, the theatre, and the like." It would seem as though Spinoza in writing these words had prophesied the coming of Goethe. "The genuine men of all times announce each other's coming in advance," says Goethe in his *Farbenlehre*. And so we read, too, in his *Vermächtnis*, the sentiment, entirely in harmony with Spinoza:

Genieße mäßig Füll' und Segen;
Vernunft sei überall zugegen,
Wo Leben sich des Lebens freut.*

Spinoza holds also that the man who lives according to the dictates of reason must keep himself free from all unpleasant emotions, such as hate, envy, fear, and sorrow, for they hinder the spirit's striving after knowledge of the Eternal. He maintains that the watchword of the wise must be, "Do good and be happy."

There is no need of argument to show how clear an exposition this is of Goethe's own philosophy of life. In still another sense the resignation which Spinoza demands is far from implying a withdrawal from the world. As though he had had foreknowledge of the age of Rousseau, he declared himself expressly against the pessimists (*melancholici*) who sing the praises of an uncultivated, rural life far away from the haunts of men. Those who are guided by reason recognise that among all things there is nothing more useful to man than his fellow-man, because he is most in harmony with his nature; furthermore, that among his fellow-men that one is most useful to him who is guided by reason. Hence the man of reason, in order to preserve his being, will endeavour as much as in him lies to lead his fellow-men to reason. He will obtain the strongest guarantee for the possibility of his own reason-guided existence, for

* Good fortune's boon enjoy with measure;
Let reason reign in every pleasure
That living doth to life afford.

his own happiness in life, in a like existence and through a like happiness in the lives of others. Such an endeavour on the part of the man of reason to benefit his neighbour makes man a god to his fellow-man.

Edel ſei der Menſch,
Hilfreich und gut! . .
Heil den unbekannten
Höhern Weſen,
Die wir ahnen!
Ihnen gleiche der Menſch;
Sein Beiſpiel lehr' uns
Jene glauben.*

Such is the plea of the much misunderstood poem *Das Göttliche*, which, far from being opposed to Spinoza's tenets, is in complete harmony with them.

Human power is limited. We have not the ability to make everything without us, nor even everything within us, comply with reason; nor can we counteract all hindrances. But we can efface the unpleasant emotions which arise from these sources by picturing to ourselves our limited powers, and, above all, by learning the conditions under which the results which disturb us must necessarily follow. "We form these conceptions," says Goethe, agreeing exactly with his philosopher, "and they are ineradicable; they are indeed strengthened, rather than overthrown, by the contemplation of ephemeral things" (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*). In this Goethe was often aided by poetry, which, after the manner of true art, elevates individual phenomena to the realm of law. Here we find the explanation of that utterance of his, which at first sight appears to us so strange, that he "transformed everything which pleased, annoyed, or other-

* Noble be man,
Helpful and good! . .
Hail to those unknown
Higher beings,
Whom we divine!
Like unto them be man
Teaching faith in them
By his example.

wise occupied him, into a poem, in order both to correct his ideas of external things, and to restore his peace of mind." "An emotion which is a passion [a suffering] ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, V, prop. 3). In this way the free man, that is to say, the man freed from the rule of his passions, the *homo liber* of Spinoza, attains to that high standpoint from which he ceases to laugh or weep over things, and seeks to understand them. Such had been Goethe's endeavour from early youth. This was the source of his "everlasting toleration," which Merck complained of, his patient, indulgent humouring of the most varied personalities, his charitable conception and explanation of the things with which we reproach people as mistakes, shortcomings, and wrongdoings.

Apart from this general agreement with the great fundamental doctrines of Spinoza, there were many other single points which made Goethe a disciple of the great thinker. Of these we shall here mention but two. Spinoza recognises three different kinds of knowledge. To the lowest, based upon isolated experiences without order, and upon the reproduction and association of them by the memory, he gives the name opinion or imagination. The second comes from thinking, which gives us clear and adequate conceptions. The third rests upon the immediate perception of truth, which he calls *cognitio intuitiva*, intuitive knowledge. "This kind of knowledge advances from the adequate idea (*adæquata idea*) of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things." * This sentence made a most profound impression upon Goethe. Being himself a man of such intuitive perceptions in the lower, as well as in the higher, sense, he felt that this thought placed the seal of approval upon his way of comprehending the world. On the 5th of May, 1786, he wrote to Fritz Jacobi, by whose contradicting views his Spinozism was constantly developed: "These few words give me

* *Cf. Ethics*, ii, prop. 40, schol. 2.—C.

courage to devote my whole life to the consideration of the things which I can reach, and of the *essentia formalis* of which I may hope to gain an adequate idea." Even as early as his discovery of the intermaxillary and the metamorphosis of plants he had learned by experience that, as he later expresses it, "all finding out, all discovering, is the exercising of an original sense of the truth, which has long been quietly maturing, and suddenly, with the rapidity of lightning, leads to fruitful knowledge. This revelation, developed in the inward soul by contact with the outer world, makes man divine his godlikeness. It is a synthesis of world and spirit which gives the happiest assurance of the eternal harmony of existence."

Another permanent impression which Goethe received from Spinoza came from the proposition: "He who loves God cannot endeavour to have God love him in return." [28] The poet assures us that this strange utterance, with all the preceding propositions upon which it is based, and all the conclusions which follow from it, filled his meditations from his very first acquaintance with Spinoza. The preceding propositions are as follows: "He who clearly and distinctly comprehends himself and his emotions loves God, and this the more, the better he comprehends himself and his emotions." (Through this knowledge, which is made possible only by a knowledge of the divine order of the world, is brought about a liberation from the suffering associated with the emotions.) "Love toward God must occupy the mind in the highest degree." "God is without passions, and is not affected with any emotion of pleasure or pain." Hence God loves nobody and hates nobody; for love is an emotion of pleasure, hate an emotion of pain—accompanied by the conception of an external cause.[29] Therefore, if one were to desire that God should love him in return, one would have to wish that God should not be God.

One can well imagine what there was in these doctrines that attracted Goethe. Through the knowledge of his emotions he, too, had more than once—to borrow a poetical expression—freed himself from demons, from the devil,

and had found again the way to God, love toward God. For his love he had expected and demanded of God love in return. Such a conclusion may be drawn from his half-jocular remark to Fräulein von Klettenberg, that God should have lent more efficient aid to his infinitely good will. Then Spinoza's solemn, majestic words came to him: "He who loves God cannot endeavour to have God love him in return." These words described very accurately the attitude which he had always out of innate unselfishness assumed toward his fellow-men. He had lavished love without demanding love in return, and he later wrote the words of Philine, "If I love thee, what is that to thee?" out of the very depths of his heart. Spinoza compelled him to reflect on himself and to apply the unselfishness which he had shown in his relations to others, which indeed had been to him a source of highest pleasure, to his relation to God, and thus to realise for himself that the love of God is not revealed in special manifestations of love toward the individual, but rather in the faculty which he has bestowed upon man to know Him and thereby to gain peace, repose, enlightenment, wisdom, and happiness. It may be said that from now on Goethe looked upon his relation to God as such that all his prayers to God were exclusively prayers for knowledge, for wisdom, that is to say, they constituted an appeal to himself. It is easily understood why Goethe said of his first acquaintance with Spinoza's *Ethica* that it had opened for him a great, unobstructed outlook over the sensuous and moral world, so that he thought he had never had such a clear view of the world; that he had here found a means for the education of his strange nature, such as he had everywhere else sought in vain. Hence Spinoza's doctrine and manner could not but make of Goethe a passionate pupil and a most decided admirer. Goethe's passionateness decreased somewhat in later years, but he always remained a disciple of Spinoza, even though he did not swear by every word of the master and never surrendered the liberty of further elaborating certain of his doctrines and of putting a broader construction upon others. Spinoza made it

possible for him to preserve his personality in the highest sense of the word.

Here, however, we touch upon the point in which Goethe differed from Spinoza definitely and decidedly—in the recognition of individuality and its rights, as well as its value. To be sure, individualistic elements are not wholly lacking in Spinoza's system; but they are greatly obscured by the pantheistic tendency to let the finite disappear altogether in the infinite. Before God and in God the world loses all its independence, and so, by implication, does every separate world-being, every human individual. In this respect the philosophy of Leibnitz supplemented Spinozism, and so, in proportion as Goethe grew into a distinct individuality, a powerful personality, he also came nearer and nearer to the monadology of Leibnitz. This is the opposite direction from that followed by Lessing, who had started with the monads of Leibnitz and, according to the testimony of Jacobi, had ended with the All-One of Spinozism. In his later life, particularly when referring to man, Goethe was fond of speaking of monads, or of entelechies, a term borrowed from Aristotle, and attached especial importance to the idea of force and activity contained in the word. How closely this conception was related to his individualism is most clearly shown in his application of it to the individualistic idea of immortality. The entelechies are forces, their nature is activity, therefore they are eternal. Of the general proposition, "Being is eternal, no existence can pass away into nothingness," he makes the personal application, "If I work restlessly on to my end, nature is obliged to provide me with another form of existence, when the present form is no longer able to support my spirit." But we are not all equally immortal; the measure of our eternity depends upon the degree of our individuality. "In order to manifest one's self in the future as a great entelechy one must be one here and now." A further contributory factor was the idea of purpose which was from the first contained in the monad of Leibnitz and the entelechy of Aristotle; these furnished the framework

for Goethe's more subtle and more profound conception of adaptation to purpose in organic nature. Thus there was formed in his mind a peculiar union of pantheism and individualism, of Spinoza and Leibnitz. This was, however, only a later addition and interpolation, for the foundation of Goethe's thought continued to remain Spinozistic.

In the years 1784 to 1786 Goethe had a second time turned to Spinoza, and had allowed his mind to become more deeply and more thoroughly permeated by the philosopher's teachings than had been the case in his younger days. In these years and the subsequent years spent in Italy his philosophy assumed final form in all essential matters, or, perhaps it would be better to say, became permanently fixed. When he returned to Weimar at the end of this period he had acquired sufficient knowledge of men, nature, art, the State, and the Church, to furnish him all the essential factors of a comprehensive view of the universe, so that he needed neither to be shaken nor surprised by new doctrines or facts. Accordingly it was from the outset to be expected that the man of forty years, who on his return from Italy represented the highest point of intellectual attainment in all Europe, would not allow himself to be forced to give up the standpoint to which he had attained. Not even by Kant,[30] the greatest thinker among his contemporaries in Germany. Seven years had already passed since Kant's epoch-making work, *Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, had appeared, and Goethe had as yet taken no notice of it. In the year of his return *Die Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* appeared; two years later, at Easter, 1790, *Die Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Goethe found everybody in Weimar busied with Kant; the Königsberg philosopher formed the central theme of all intellectual debates. Reinhold, the son-in-law of Wieland, had made of Jena also a stronghold of Kantianism. The Jena theologian and orientalist Paulus complained, in 1790, that it would soon be necessary to apply the philosophy of Kant to Oriental grammar, if one did not wish to be cast aside as antiquated in it. Goethe was not at all in the habit of

keeping out of the way of a great, productive phenomenon, even when he had every reason to fear trouble from it. He was also just as free from the habit, to which Herder was addicted, of approaching such a phenomenon with sullen wrath, for the purpose of picking out of it only the things to which he could offer objections. He took up the works of Kant with as perfect composure as he would have taken up any object in nature, and, contrary to Herder's practice, selected from them that which harmonised with his own personality, or at least seemed to do so, and promoted his progress.

Nothing more could have been expected, for Kant neither gives nor pretends to give a connected philosophy of the world. His first and most important aim is to investigate what we can know. He traces the processes of cognition in the formation of percepts, concepts, judgments, and ideas, and arrives at the conclusion that we never know things themselves, but always and only their phenomena, and that the ideas by means of which our reason seeks to give ultimate unity to the concepts of our understanding lie outside of all experience; that especially the ideas of soul, world, and God, to which we are inclined to allow all our empirical knowledge to contribute, are, as objects of theoretical knowledge, nothing but "sophistications" of our reason, for which no proof can be brought forward. Such is the reasoning of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. To be sure, the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality are rehabilitated as postulates of "practical reason"; but as such they have reality only for the "intelligible" man, that is to say, the man belonging to the moral world. As to how real being and its phenomena, the "intelligible" and the empirical man (man living and working in the world of sense), God and nature, the realm of freedom and that of necessity, are interrelated, Kant does not express himself, except in occasional conjectures and suggestions, and even then he always declares emphatically that our reason has no means of predicating anything definite on the subject. Hence Goethe was justified in

saying to Victor Cousin that Kant's philosophy was a method rather than a system.*

This fact was altogether favourable for his position with reference to Kant. If Kant had arranged his views in a connected, well-ordered system our poet would have shrunk back before the mighty chasm which separated him from Kant, and it would have kept him from receiving the many good things which Kant had to offer him. Kant's God, differing from nature in essence and placed above it in authority, as a postulate of practical reason, the division of the world into a subjective world of phenomena and a real world of which we can have no cognition, the separation of man into a man of absolute moral freedom and a man limited by his senses—all this was as different from Goethe's views as day is from night. It condemned all his feelings, thoughts, and intuitions, his whole attitude of heart toward the world, its revelations to him, and his progress in knowledge of its ways, as grave error, and stigmatised his nature, of the healthiness of which he was very proud, as disordered. But as he was only very dimly conscious of this discord, owing to Kant's method of presentation, his rejection of Kant's philosophy was couched in very mild terms. On the 23d of November, 1801, after he had carried on his study of Kant and associated with Kantians for more than a decade, he wrote to Jacobi: "When philosophy makes separation its chief aim, I find it impossible to derive any gain from it, and I may well say it has at times injured me by disturbing me in my natural course; but when it integrates, or, rather, when it heightens and strengthens, our original feeling that we are one with nature, and transforms this feeling into a calm, deep perception, which by its constant process of integration (syncrisis) and differentiation (diacrisis) makes us feel a divine life, even though we be not permitted to lead such a life, then I welcome it."

Thus, in spite of Kant's criticism, Goethe remained the same Spinozist that he had been, and Spinozism was to him philosophy *par excellence*. "If there be a man to whom

* *Cf.* Biedermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, iii, 290. —C.

it is not clear that mind and matter, soul and body, thought and extension were, are, and shall be the necessary double ingredients of the universe, both of which may claim equal rights, and hence both together may be looked upon as representatives of God . . . , he should long ago have given up thinking and applied his days to the common gossip of the world," wrote Goethe in 1812 to Jacobi, without being conscious that in reality he was pronouncing condemnation upon Kant. For it never occurred to Kant to recognise mind and matter as equally justifiable and equally valuable forms of manifestation of one and the same substance, as Goethe did, in harmony with Spinoza. Goethe desires to hold fast his unseparated existence, he desires to create for himself the possibility of arriving at the objective world itself, which critico-ideal philosophy can never succeed in doing. "Defend himself as he will against things in themselves, the idealist will nevertheless, before he is aware, come in contact with things outside himself" is to be sure not a refutation of Kant, but it characterises Goethe's standpoint.

Soul, world, God are to him intensely real things, for which he needs no proofs. World and God are identical to him; the world-deity manifests itself daily in his soul. For this reason God signifies to him something entirely different from a postulate of "intelligible" man, especially as this God would have dealt anything but kindly with man acting in accordance with the dictates of his own free will. For, as Kant teaches, God implanted in him both the inclination for evil and the faculty for good, and left it to his moral freedom and responsibility to choose between the two. But as the inclination for evil as given to man is naturally his stronger element, it is made unjustly difficult for him to turn to the good. This was the only point in Kant's doctrine which aroused Goethe's wrath. He might have been willing to forgive the "free will which presumes to act by nature against nature"; but the fact that Kant attributed a radically evil element to human nature seemed to the disciple of Rousseau and Spinoza a sin of the

philosopher against himself, and so he said of him that he "had sinfully defiled his philosopher's mantle with the disgraceful spot of radical evil" (June 7, 1793).

He was more in sympathy with the positive side of Kant's ethics, the categorical imperative, which demands of man the absolute fulfilment of duty, and admits as virtue, as morality, only such actions as proceed solely from respect for the moral law. Although this code of ethics had an element of "over-severity" and excluded from moral actions every element of grace and cordiality, still Goethe rejoiced in its counterbalancing effect upon the loose, flaccid morals which had prevailed in Germany, from the subjectivism of the Storm-and-Stress period down to the individualistic eudemonism of the romanticists, to which even he himself had for the time being subscribed ("I obey my dear heart in all its promptings"). Although he nowhere expressly says so, it must have afforded him, as an enemy of the revolution, supreme satisfaction that, at a time when all the world was clamouring for rights, Kant with all the earnestness of his powerful personality was reminding man of his duties. But in spite of his friendly attitude toward Kant's categorical imperative there was nevertheless even on this point a wide contrast between them; Goethe's moral ideals rested upon an entirely different basis.

In another field, however, there were things in common which made Goethe's relation to the great reformer of philosophy a very close one. Kant's theory of knowledge had made a deep impression upon him, little as he was pleased with its ultimate conclusions. Hitherto his excursions into the field of science had been characterised by a certain naïveté; he had trusted his senses and his understanding and had told what he believed he had discovered about things, without asking himself how largely the subjective element had entered into his perceptions and judgments, and whether he had really investigated things in all the relations under which the understanding can consider them. Kant now turned his attention to the

forms which are original with the mind, the forms under which we perceive and comprehend things, and gave him thus a means of testing the exactness and thoroughness of his concrete, purely objective thinking, and Goethe felt very grateful for this valuable aid. On the 17th of October, 1796, he wrote to Jacobi: "Thou wouldst no longer find me such a strict realist. It gives me a great advantage to have become somewhat better acquainted with the other ways of thinking, ways which, although they can never become my ways, I have nevertheless the greatest practical need of as a supplement to my onesidedness." Later he confessed that by means of this criticism of his own scientific thinking, to which Kant had shown him the way, he had attained to a state of greater enlightenment, freedom, and self-consciousness. The importance of Kant's theory of knowledge became especially clear to him when he saw how Kant, by the aid of it, arrived at the most fruitful results in science, which he very gladly welcomed. Thus, in his *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, Kant, from his investigation by pure reason, independent of experience, had reached the conclusion that matter is inconceivable, except as the object of an attractive force as well as of a repulsive force, and to this had added the comment that from these qualities of matter could be derived a better explanation of its infinite variety (dynamical theory) than could be based on the hypothesis of a variety of forms of absolutely impenetrable atoms (mechanical theory). In these teachings Goethe found the strongest confirmation of the view which he had always held of the original polarity of all things, which permeates and animates nature as the great motive power in all the infinite variety of her phenomena, and it was a pleasure for him to be able, on Kant's authority, to hold fast this view and to develop it further.

Much as the poet was pleased over the corroboration of his conception of polarity, he derived still greater pleasure from Kant's clear and thorough demonstration, in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, of how the creations of art and nature have

in themselves no thought of purpose, how in fact art positively excludes purposes, because our pleasure in it is expected to be and must be disinterested. Whereas Kant in this way corroborated Spinoza's rejection of all outward purposes, he nevertheless in the same work followed out still further his own independent course in his doctrine of the inward adaptability to purpose of works of art and organic nature. In art this adaptability to purpose is discovered subjectively as a form of adaptability of an object to its purpose, which we feel and see without any concept of purpose; in organic beings it appears objectively as adaptability of the whole to the parts and of the parts to the whole, in other words, as the basis of their structure and the condition of their existence. It was precisely by some such thought that Goethe himself had been guided in his researches in organic nature. He very soon, however, branched off from Kant and went far beyond him. In his search for the original plant and the original animal he was primarily concerned only with the single species of plants and animals. He sought to discover the type and the original form in accordance with which it had taken form and out of which it had developed. But when he further said of this original form that it "was still daily undergoing further development and transformation through reproduction," he came indeed very close to the idea of a great comprehensive family of living beings developing from one ancestral organic form. Kant had called this "archæology of nature" a praiseworthy undertaking, but at the same time had also characterised it as "a daring adventure of reason," because experience did not offer sufficient grounds for it. No such considerations deterred Goethe from making the venture in his own way. He sought support in other passages in which Kant to a certain extent admitted that he was warranted in entering upon the adventure. One such passage reads as follows: "We can imagine an understanding, which, because it is not, like ours, discursive, but intuitive, will proceed from the synthesised universal, from the contemplation of a whole as

such, to the particular, that is, from the whole to its parts. It is not at all necessary to prove that such an *intellectus archetypus* is possible; we need only show that, by contrasting our discursive understanding (*intellectus ectypus*), which has need of pictures, with the contingency of one so constituted, we are led to the idea of an *intellectus archetypus*, and that this involves no contradiction of terms." Goethe interprets this passage in his own fashion, as follows: "To be sure, the author seems here to refer to a divine understanding, but if we, by faith in God, in virtue (more correctly, freedom), and in immortality, are to rise to a higher region in the moral world, and are to approach the First Being, then the same thing may well be true in the intellectual sphere, that we, by contemplating an ever-creating nature, make ourselves worthy of taking an intellectual part in her productions."

In this way Goethe, by a *salto mortale*, which he renders more plausible by the vague conception of "making worthy," goes from Kant's intuitive understanding of God, which Kant admits only as a hypothesis, back to the intuitive knowledge of man, Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva*, which Kant rejects as empty sophistry. No other point of comparison will show so clearly how little Goethe had assimilated of Kant's philosophy, and how, in reading Kant, he searched for Spinoza, or, in other words, for that which harmonised or seemed to harmonise, with his own long cherished ideas. Here again we see his powerful individuality, which repulsed everything foreign to itself, or compelled it to amalgamate with his nature. He himself puts it in this way: that he sought, if not to fathom, at least, as far as possible, to make use of, Kant's philosophy. Hence we can understand why he received little approval from the Kantians for what he made his own and for his manner of appropriation, and why many of them confessed to him, with smiling wonderment, that what he said was doubtless an analogon to Kant's views, but a strange one.

Among these Kantians, toward whom his attitude was as strange as theirs was toward him, was first of all Fichte,

whose natureless philosophy necessarily repulsed him, the enthusiastic lover of nature. Neither was there any bond of personal sympathy between them, as was shown by Goethe's position in the controversy over Fichte's atheism. Not until the description of the province of pedagogy, in the *Wanderjahre*, did Goethe touch upon the idea of social education which Fichte had expressed in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation*.

His relation to Schelling was much closer.[31] He became acquainted with Schelling at the time when the latter was going over from Fichte to Spinoza. On this new foundation Schelling, with his views on the philosophy of nature, met Goethe half way; Schelling's nature was also the *natura naturans* of Spinoza, in that living sense in which Goethe worshipped her as a mother and devoted himself to her full of trust and faith. Likewise the monistic idea of the omnipresence of life in nature agreed exactly with Goethe's views. Goethe even allowed himself to be greatly impressed for a time with the clever, but scientifically worthless, trifling with vague analogies, in which Schelling's philosophy of nature delighted. He was especially pleased with the way in which Schelling drew a parallel between creation in nature and creation in art. In this particular he knew that he was thoroughly in accord with Schelling and his oration, *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur* (1807), as he had been before with Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.

Hegel, on the other hand, with his lack of form, repulsed him at first, so that he was led to say, "I do not care to know anything about Hegel." In later years, however, he enjoyed Hegel's personal friendship, which he called "one of the fairest flowers of his ever more and more developing springtime of the soul" (letter to Hegel, May, 1824). Through their conversations they discovered a similarity between their views on fundamental matters, and Goethe learned to know Hegel's philosophy better and to judge it more correctly. In their respect for reality and for objectivity, which they so strongly emphasised as

opposed to romantic subjectivism, they had common ground enough upon which to come to an understanding. But even here there remained a difference between them. Hegel's interest was centred in the historical world; nature was to him "the idea in its other existence;" and hence of less value. Goethe on the other hand declared his preference for the study of nature, "in which we have to do with the infinitely and eternally true."

So, as the matter finally rested, of all the philosophers Goethe stood nearest to Spinoza and his pantheistic philosophy of the world, and next after him, but at a somewhat greater distance, Schelling and his philosophy of nature. That, in spite of these facts, he called Kant "the most excellent philosopher . . . whose teachings had proved to be an enduring force and had entered most deeply into German civilisation," only serves to show how objectively, and with what historical correctness, he was able to judge; for he did not overlook the fact that Kant had "never taken notice" of him.

Even though Goethe so decidedly rejected Kant's way of thinking as a whole, and never adopted anything more than isolated fragments of his philosophy, and even though it was only through such fragments that Kant ever became a moulding influence in his life, the fact that he became acquainted with Kant's teachings at all, and that this occurred in the years 1789 to 1794, was a matter of extraordinary importance for a new and most significant relation into which he was about to enter.

VII

SCHILLER

Unlikelihood of friendship between young Schiller and Goethe—Schiller's experiences before coming to Weimar—His first sojourn in Weimar —Impressions of Goethe, who was absent in Italy—Finally Meets Goethe at the home of Lengefelds in Volkstädt—No promise of friendship between the two—Schiller appointed professor of history in Jena—Resents Goethe's cold treatment—Schiller's marriage to Charlotte von Lengefeld—Still no friendship between the poets— Contrast between their intellectual lives and between their works —Contrast between their methods of writing—Reason for greater popularity of Schiller's works—Goethe's wider range of experience in life—His aversion to Schiller's early dramas—Schiller made a French *citoyen*—Transformation in his esthetics under Greek influence—His political conversion—More of an aristocrat than Goethe—Refining influences brought to bear on him—Meeting of the two poets in Jena leads to lasting friendship—Kant's philosophy the means of bringing them together—Their views coincide as to the nature of the beautiful—Schiller's famous letter to Goethe, characterising Goethe's genius—Goethe's rupture with Herder—His relation to the Duke cooled—Closer friendship with Schiller—New period of productivity under Schiller's influence— Jena the new intellectual centre—Goethe's friends there—*Reineke Fuchs*—*Venezianische Epigramme*—*Literarischer Sanskulottismus* —*Die Xenien*—*Walpurgisnachtstraum*—Effect of *Xenien*—Letter from Goethe's mother.

WHILE Goethe was spending his thirty-eighth birthday in Rome, Knebel and Schiller were celebrating the event over a bottle of Rhenish wine in Goethe's Gartenhaus at home. On the following day Schiller wrote to Körner: "Hardly did he in Italy suspect that I was among the guests in his house; but truly wonderful are the decrees of fate." The beginning of the friendship between Goethe and Schiller may well be designated a wonderful decree of fate.

At the end of 1780, when Schiller stepped out of school into life, nothing seemed more improbable than that the Württembergian regimental surgeon and the Weimar minister, the author of *Die Räuber* and the author of *Iphigenie*, would ever become very dear friends. Even the distance between their homes seemed as unfavourable as anything could be for friendly intercourse.

A conflict between his military service and his calling as a poet forced Schiller to flee from Stuttgart. He remained in South Germany, however, and seemed to be becoming a fixture there as writer for the theatre in Mannheim, when untoward circumstances forced him to depart from the mouth of the Neckar. Whither did he turn his steps? To North Germany, to Leipsic and Dresden, whither he was drawn by men who were personally total strangers to him, but were enthusiastic admirers of his poetry, Christian Gottfried Körner and his friend Huber. Thus Schiller moved considerably nearer to the scene of Goethe's activities, and there were soon spun further threads toward the strong bond which was to unite them. On Schiller's arrival, Körner, whose hospitality he enjoyed longer than anyone's else, was already the betrothed, and soon afterward became the husband, of Minna Stock, the daughter of the Leipsic engraver in whose home Goethe had once spent such pleasant and profitable hours. Thus Schiller began to catch something of the inspiration that went out from Goethe's personality. He remained two years in the Electorate of Saxony, and was then forced again to take up the staff of the wanderer. Being unable any longer to eke out a living, which depended partly on Körner's assistance and partly on the incurrence of debt, he began to cast about for the means of obtaining a sure subsistence, and his eye very naturally fell upon Weimar. He felt that he must see if he too could not obtain at this much-praised seat of the Muses a position which would afford him a livelihood. He based his hopes partly upon the fact that, by a remarkable coincidence, Karl August had

made his acquaintance in Darmstadt and had bestowed upon him the title of Councillor.

On the 21st of July, 1787, he arrived in Weimar. The most brilliant star of the Weimar firmament was not to be seen. Goethe was sojourning in Italy. It was still much too soon to hope for a union with him. Schiller recognised his greatness in its thousand-fold reflections. "Goethe's spirit has moulded all the people who belong to his circle." "As a man he is admired and loved even more than as an author." "He is everything that he is with his whole soul, and, like Julius Cæsar, he has the faculty of being several things at once." These are a few of the things that Schiller observed and heard about Goethe soon after his arrival in Weimar. He, too, had revered the author of *Götz* and *Werther*, but it now for the first time fully dawned upon him that this same author was an eminent statesman, scientist, and connoisseur of art, and, above all else, a very unusual man. The absent poet grew to gigantic proportions in his eyes; the gifted writer became an extraordinary personality, overtowering all about him with his universal genius. This was a double reason for tarrying in Weimar and waiting to see what the future had in store.

On a journey through Thuringia Schiller made the acquaintance of the Lengefeld family in Rudolstadt, and his acquaintance with the two daughters, Karoline and Charlotte, was continued in Weimar, whither they came for a protracted visit. Out of the acquaintance grew friendship and love, and during the summer there was for Schiller no more charming region than the environs of Rudolstadt. Here we discover a new thread destined to enter into the bond between him and Goethe. As friends of Frau von Stein, and as visiting members of Weimar society, the Lengefeld sisters had often been in Goethe's society and had entered with all their hearts into full communion with those who looked up to the poet with admiration. They now became the charming means of bringing the two poets together for the first time.

On the 18th of June, 1788, Goethe had returned to

Schiller

from a portrait by Graff

Weimar; Schiller was tarrying in Volkstädt, near Rudolstadt, and burning with impatience to see him; but love held him fast in Volkstädt. Then Goethe came to visit Frau von Stein, at Kochberg, not far off, whence he departed, on the 7th of September, accompanied by his hostess, and by Frau von Schardt and Karoline Herder, to pay a visit to his esteemed friends, the Lengefelds. Schiller spent almost a whole day with him, and although the entire circle made claims on Goethe, who was unable to do anything except chat and tell stories about Italy, still he verified the "great idea" which Schiller had formed of him from Weimar observations and descriptions. This very corroboration of his idea of Goethe caused his hopes of ever entering into closer relations with him to fall very low. On the other hand he felt a greater stimulus to command at least a higher degree of respect from this great man.

In the middle of November Schiller returned to Weimar. A few weeks later he was offered a professorship of history in Jena, as a result of the favourable impression made by his *Geschichte des Abfalls der Niederlande*. He made this an occasion to pay his respects to Goethe, the real overseer of the University. Goethe kindly assured the hesitating candidate that one learns by teaching, and in other ways showed "much interest in what he believed would make for Schiller's good fortune." Thus Goethe unsuspectingly endeavoured to hold permanently in his neighbourhood the man who was to become his most valued companion.

During the negotiations concerning the Jena professorship Schiller may have cherished the hope that something would arise to bring him into closer touch with Goethe, but he was doomed to bitter disappointment. During the five months which Schiller spent in Weimar after the receipt of his appointment Goethe did not take the least notice of him. Resentment began to take possession of his soul. After all he was not a mere cipher. He had already given to the German people four important dramas, *Die Räuber*, *Fiesco*, *Kabale und Liebe*, and *Don Carlos*, beside many remarkable shorter works; and many of the

most distinguished spirits of the country had lavished praise upon him and paid their respects to him. Was it right, then, that he should be so entirely ignored by Goethe? Was it right that he should be treated merely as an incipient historian, who, after having received some encouragement and been installed in an office, was to be left to shift fo himself? He certainly had every reason to value himself as highly as the novelist and esthetician Moritz, whom that same winter Goethe had as a guest in his own house for two months, and with whom he carried on the liveliest exchange of ideas. How was Schiller to harmonise this with what he had seen and heard of Goethe's goodness and amiability? It could not well be haughtiness or indifference, and certainly not jealousy of the ambitious young rival. What was it then? "He desires to put others under obligations to himself, but to keep himself free from obligations to others," was Schiller's answer to the question. "He manifests his existence graciously, but only as a god, without giving himself. This seems to me a consistent, well-planned way of conducting himself, calculated solely to procure the highest enjoyment of self-love."

Consistent and well-planned the conduct was, but wholly without self-love, even in what might be conceded to be the noble sense which Schiller had in mind. It was rather a heroic struggle for the preservation of his personality, in the exalted sense of Spinoza. This preservation would at that time have been as greatly interfered with by Schiller as it was later advanced by him. There were others beside Schiller, people who had less excuse for their distorted judgment, who misunderstood this and misunderstood it more completely.

Schiller continued to live by the side of Goethe with strangely mingled feelings. He was unable to throw off the magic spell which Goethe's personality cast over him, and yet he could not help feeling resentment that Goethe, like an Olympian god, overlooked him and took supreme satisfaction in self-enjoyment. "I could kill his spirit, and again I could love him with all my heart." "He

arouses in me a feeling which is not wholly unlike that which Brutus and Cassius must have had toward Cæsar." As Schiller was unable to step up to Goethe's side and walk with him, Goethe very naturally became in his mind the man "who was in his way."

In February, 1790, Schiller was married to Charlotte von Lengefeld, and this seemed to be a bridge which would span the chasm between them and bind them together in a firm union. Here again he met with disappointment. To be sure, the next time Goethe came to Jena he could not avoid visiting Schiller, and he did visit him, on the 31st of October, but the occasion served only to make both men conscious that they were not suited to each other. Three more years went by, and they were still as much strangers to each other as on the first day of their acquaintance.

The problem of uniting them seemed to defy solution. A greater contrast than that between them can scarcely be imagined. Goethe had started with the study of mental science and had turned more and more to nature. Schiller had started with natural science and had become more and more absorbed in the sphere of the purely intellectual. At the same time that Schiller was regretting that he had not been studying history for the past ten years (April 15, 1786), Goethe was praising his good fortune (May 5, 1786) that God had blessed him with "physics" (natural science). Whereas Schiller thought that history would have made an entirely different man of him, Goethe felt that history had never exerted any influence upon him. Philosophy had attracted Schiller more powerfully than history. Philosophical speculation was his passion, and, even in later times, when he looked upon philosophy with a sceptical eye, it still permeated all his intellectual work. Goethe's intellectual life, on the other hand, had never developed out of speculation, and he had pitied the "fellow who speculates," the man with the thorn of metaphysics in his flesh. He derived his philosophy from the contemplation of nature and the world, and, as the results of this contem-

plation agreed with Spinoza, and for no other reason, he was a follower of Spinoza. As illustrative of this contrast it may be said that Schiller's mind always worked dialectically, Goethe's intuitively.

This accounts for the great contrast between their writings: Schiller, always subjective, striving after the embodiment of his thought; Goethe, always objective, endeavouring to give spiritual form to his intuitive perceptions. In Schiller's works the ideas present themselves to us without our seeking after them, for which reason he is called an idealist; in Goethe's, on the other hand, it is only things that present themselves to us at first, and we are obliged to seek out the ideas for ourselves, for which reason he is called a realist. The writer who desires to produce effects chiefly by means of ideas seeks to bring out his ideas as forcibly as possible, and hence employs all the resources of rhetoric; the writer whose chief concern is to represent things will paint them as clearly as possible and will shun rather than seek rhetorical devices. Schiller's poetry, starting from the idea, has many ways of making the idea real, according as this way or that seems, after mature reflection, the one best adapted to the purpose; the poet operates like a chess-player. Goethe's poetry, starting with the picture, always has at the outset but one way, and that the way that leads to the picture which he sees; there may be digressions along the way, but the way can be wholly departed from only when the picture changes. Furthermore, Schiller, in order to give life to his persons, who are the product of his thought, must make them engage in vigorous action; Goethe, on the other hand, must draw true to nature his persons, whom he sees. We are interested in Schiller's characters only after we know what they do; we are interested in Goethe's because of what they are. Goethe is so absorbed in the representation of what his characters are that he is prone to neglect to show us what they do, so that there is often something feminine about his men; whereas Schiller's women have something masculine about them, and both his men and

women are somewhat shadowy, except when they are called upon to act energetically. Goethe can describe only what he has seen. "I should never dare to treat such a subject [one which he had never seen], because I lack the knowledge of it which comes from direct observation." Schiller undertakes the venturesome task, making up for his lack of immediate knowledge by an energetic fancy, and his ventures are crowned with admirable success.

Goethe must let his works grow to maturity; he has no commanding power over them. "The poems had me, not I them." Schiller works with a strong, conscious hand, and compels every subject to yield to his will. He commands poetry. The works of Goethe have the inward necessity of nature. Nobody ever recognised this more clearly than did Schiller. Schiller's human and poetic freedom creates art products.

Let us follow one step further the contrast between the two men. Schiller discovers his gems of thought along the way of logical conclusions. Hence it is possible for him always to be clear. Goethe owes the best of his treasures to intuition, to sudden flashes of inspiration. He has the conclusion first and finds it difficult to show the premises upon which the conclusion rests. Hence in motivation he is often obscure and one-sided. Through the clearness of his thoughts and presentations, which is most beautifully accompanied by idealistic enthusiasm, Schiller has become the instructor, the educator, the preacher of the nation; through his deep-penetrating vision Goethe has become the nation's seer and prophet. Schiller is within the range of every one's comprehension, he attracts every one, and carries every one away with him; Goethe attracts only the delicately responsive, and only the initiated can wholly understand him. He needs interpreters. Only when these have performed their work for centuries will Goethe enjoy the popularity which Schiller has always enjoyed.

If it had not been a matter of temperament with Schiller to prefer the realm of thought to the real world, his experiences in life would necessarily have led him to make

such a choice. The real world had not been congenial to him. It had shut him up for years in the confinement of a military school, then subjected him to the despotism of a violent prince, and finally persecuted him with distress and disease. How much more beautiful and free it was in the world of thought! Here he was the ruler; from this base he could sally forth and overcome hostile reality in every form, even in the form of his own physical sufferings. What a relief he must have found in the philosophy of Kant, which makes man the creator of the phenomenal world, because this exists only by virtue of the forms of his knowledge,—a philosophy which clothes man with sovereignty in the moral sphere, and gives him nature as a servant, whose refractoriness it endows his mind with power to tame! How great the contrast with Goethe, who reveres nature as his kind mother, feels at one with her, and from this harmony draws his wisdom and his happiness!

This contrast in principles was further broadened by the difference between the two men in experience and knowledge. Goethe knew Central Europe from Chalons to Cracow; he knew the Tyrol, Switzerland, Savoy, and Italy, the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas. To him the Neapolitan lazzarone, the Swiss shepherd, the Thuringian peasant, the French tradesman, the Upper-Silesian smelter were familiar figures. He had come into contact with an endless number of eminent minds and persons high in authority. Secular and ecclesiastical princes, statesmen, generals, artists, poets, philosophers, and scholars were members of the great circle in which he moved. He had gathered an immeasurable fund of observations of nature and art, had himself been engaged as an artist; he had been an administrator and a ruler, had seen war and peace.

What did Schiller have to compare with this? He had led the modest life of an author, had travelled from Swabia to Saxony, had come in touch with a small number of mediocre minds, and as for plastic art, and even nature, he was still a stranger to them both. All of this Schiller

felt very keenly when he wrote after their first meeting; "He is so far in advance of me, in years less than in experience in life and self-development, that we shall never again meet on the way."

And as though everything were to conspire to confirm Schiller in his hopelessness, Goethe cherished the greatest aversion to Schiller's productions, of which *Die Räuber*[32] seemed to him typical. While he was happy that he himself had outgrown the wildness and formlessness of the Storm-and-Stress period, he saw these elements here carried to further extremes than he had ever gone; and while he thought that his higher and nobler achievements in art had prepared the way for a purer taste, he saw how Schiller was ruining their effect and was receiving the greatest applause for the most heinous monstrosities of a bygone epoch. To make matters worse, this applause was not confined to the vulgar crowd, to "wild students"; it was also heard among "educated Court ladies." In Breslau Goethe even had to pass through the experience of seeing *Die Räuber* played before an audience of princes. What pain this must have caused the poet who in Italy had filled his mind with the clear perceptions out of which had grown *Iphigenie* and *Tasso!* "I thought I saw all my efforts completely lost; the things to which I had educated myself, the whole method of my training, seemed to me thrust to one side and undone."

The breaking out of the French revolution must have made Schiller's dramas still more offensive to him. In addition to being objectionable on esthetic grounds they now became so for political reasons. The revolt against law and order, the frenzied enthusiasm for freedom, which obtruded itself even in the more refined *Don Carlos*, could not fail to aggravate the general revolutionary passion. Finally, when Schiller in 1792 was made a citizen of France, in recognition of his *Räuber*, this seemed to confirm Goethe in all his fears. How pleased he must have felt to have a French *citoyen* at the University of Jena! Jena was already much too Parisian to suit him. That he, the

Weimar minister of state, should enter into friendly relations with this French *citoyen*, as Dalberg, for example, desired, must have seemed to him the most grotesque idea imaginable. "Intellectual antipodes are separated from each other by more than one diameter of the earth," was his reply to one such attempt at mediation.

And yet, at the very time when the contrast seemed to have reached the climax, considerable progress toward mutual friendship had been quietly made. Schiller had completely renounced the naturalism of his youth and had begun to emulate the idealising art of Goethe. This process of transformation was evident enough even in *Don Carlos*, and Goethe could not have helped recognising it, and that, too, with satisfaction, if the abstract longing for liberty, which runs through the play, had not made a dispassionate appreciation of it impossible for him. The change in Schiller became more and more marked during the succeeding years. The admiration for everything Greek, which he found among the Weimar heroes, was the means of interesting him in the Hellenic world of beauty, and immediately he turned with fiery zeal to the ancients. In Goethe's *Iphigenie* antiquity seemed to him born anew. On the 20th of August, 1788, he wrote, that for the next two years he would read only the works of the ancients, that they alone gave him true enjoyment. "At the same time I have the greatest need of them in order to purify my own taste, which was beginning to develop away from true simplicity, because of my fondness for subtlety, elaboration, and conceits." Thus he experienced his Italy through the study of the Greeks. The conversion was of greater moment to his views than to his writings, which could only remain the product of his ungreek nature. An understanding of simple beauty, reposeful objectivity, and sensuous cheerfulness was acquired by him in full measure. He entered into more intimate relations with plastic art and nature.

His change of esthetics was followed by his political conversion. "Against the tyrants!" had heretofore been

his watchword. The French revolution found a joyous echo in his soul and the French Convention became to his mind the court of reason. Indeed, in view of his French citizenship, he had no small desire to strike his humble tent in Jena and cast about for a more sumptuous one in Paris. But the execution of the King was followed by an immediate and complete revulsion of feeling on his part. He was now disgusted with the knacker's hirelings (February 8, 1793). Although he still declared social and political liberty to be the most worthy goal of man's ambition, he now saw no hope of obtaining it, or even approaching it, for centuries to come. For the present he became a strict aristocrat. To him the common man became synonymous with the eternally blind man, to whom the heavenly torch of light should not be intrusted. Like Goethe he demanded that citizens be first created for the constitution before a constitution be given to citizens. The way to go about this he pointed out in his essay *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, which was in full harmony with Goethe's views. He developed these ideas on the esthetic education of man in the years 1793 and 1794, and remained faithful to them to the end of his life; for his final political views are expressed in *Demetrius*, not in *Tell*. Even Goethe, who had most accurate knowledge to judge from, declared that Schiller was far more of an aristocrat than he himself was.

In spite of their great advances toward common ground in esthetics and politics, the difference between them still remained very great in other matters. Opposite traits of character do not, however, necessarily prevent two men from being friends.* On the contrary, the contrast may become a bond of union between them, when each man sees himself supplemented in the other, and still more so when the contrast acts as a constant stimulus to both men, resulting in fruitful competition and mutual criticism. This presupposes a certain type of character. It is only a

* *Cf.* Goethe's beautiful confession in his letter to Schiller of July 7, 1796.

man who asserts his own peculiarity in a broad and liberal sense, only a man who is able to appreciate and honour the standpoint of another man, be it ever so different from his own, only a man who without envy concedes another man his strong points, who can make such a contrast a source of benefit. Goethe fulfilled these conditions, but Schiller did not originally. We first find him conforming to this type of man in the years 1790 to 1794, when his whole character underwent an important process of refinement under the influence of his tender, cultured wife, and that of a long, serious illness. All his restlessness, angularity, excesses, vulgar inclinations, and forcedness were cast aside, and he became the exalted, noble, reposeful personality whom we all admire. In addition to this his idealistic striving gave his spirit an element of sublimity. As though conscious that his pilgrimage on earth would endure but a little while longer, he applied his soul with redoubled energy to the things that are highest. And thus, as Goethe describes it, he was always in possession of his powerful, ideal energy. "He was as great at the tea-table as he would have been in the Council of State. Nothing embarrassed him, nothing cramped him, nothing lowered the flight of his thoughts." One who saw his tall, spare figure, with his pale, spiritual face and gentle eyes, could not easily avoid a feeling of reverence for him. A conversation with him served only to deepen this feeling.

Nun glühte ſeine Wange rot und röter
Von jener Jugend, die uns nie entfliegt,
Von jenem Mut, der früher oder ſpäter
Den Widerſtand der ſtumpfen Welt beſiegt,
Von jenem Glauben, der ſich ſtets erhöhter
Bald kühn hervordrängt, bald geduldig ſchmiegt,
Damit das Gute wirke, wachſe, fromme,
Damit der Tag dem Edlen endlich komme.*

*And then his face was flushed, more brightly glowing
With youth, which from our souls doth ne'er take flight;
With courage, which, a zeal undaunted showing,
Doth from the dull world ever win the fight;

It was now no longer possible for Goethe to approach Schiller without being irresistibly drawn to him. Schiller's purely human nature was sure to triumph over all differences that still existed and could never be removed. The opportune moment came in the summer of 1794, when Schiller had just returned to Jena from a nine months' sojourn for recreation in Swabia. They met at a session of the Jena Society for the Advancement of Science, and accidentally came out together.[33] They talked about the lecture they had just heard, and Schiller remarked that such a piecemeal method of dealing with nature could afford no satisfaction whatever to the layman who might feel inclined to take it up. "To that I replied," says Goethe, "that perhaps even the initiated never felt at ease in it, and that it seemed to me there could certainly be another way of approaching the subject, not by treating phenomena piecemeal and separately, but by representing nature alive and at work, proceeding from the whole to the parts. . . . We came to his house, the conversation enticed me in, and there I explained to him enthusiastically the metamorphosis of plants, and, drawing a number of characteristic lines with a pen, developed a symbolical plant before his eyes. He heard and saw it all with great interest, with decided power of comprehension; but when I had ended he shook his head and said: 'That is not an experience, it is an idea.' " At this point it must have been apparent how important it was that Goethe should lately have been making himself familiar with the line of thought of Kant's philosophy. Otherwise he would not have been able to understand all the objections which Schiller doubtless brought forward, for the arguments back and forth continued for some time. As it was, he was able to content himself with the thought that, for one who divides the world into a world of phenomena which we can know and a real world which we cannot

> With faith, which, ever more exalted growing,
> Now meekly bows, now soars to bolder height,
> That good may thrive, its helpful power gain,
> And noble man at last his day attain.

know, ideas can, naturally, have only the character of pictures of the reason, out of which the reason constructs for itself a regular order of phenomena; that, however, no decision is herewith arrived at for one who believes that the real world reveals itself to him; in Goethe's mind it was entirely possible for experience and idea to be identical.

Whereas in the discussion of this topic Kant was the means of bringing about an understanding of the opposite points of view, in the next topic which came up in the conversation he brought the two poets together on common ground. They talked about art and the theory of art. Here both were able to make Kant's theory the starting point. That the beautiful, purposive as it may seem to us, must not serve any particular purpose, but must be an object of wholly free pleasure in order to produce in us that enjoyment which the free play of our emotional powers engenders—this Kantian definition of the beautiful had long been Goethe's own real belief, even though he had never clearly formulated it. It had also become Schiller's, after he had read *Die Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Schiller, however, was as little satisfied as was Goethe with Kant's purely subjective definition of the beautiful, and sought to supplement it by means of an objective definition, in the form of the older theory of perfection. In letters which he wrote to Körner, back in 1793, he developed his ideas, starting, though in a veiled way, with the inward adaptability to purpose, maintained by Kant, which we must perceive in every beautiful thing without any thought of purpose, if we are to designate it as beautiful. This inward adaptability to purpose, or this adaptability to purpose working out from within, is synonymous with self-determination or freedom. According to this, beauty is freedom in outward manifestation. From this Schiller drew the further inference that "technique is always something foreign, unless it be a direct outgrowth of the thing itself, and be one with its entire existence, coming out from within, and not entering into from without—a necessary, inherent part of the thing, and not something that has been imposed

upon it, which would be accidental." Hence style, the highest stage of art, consists only in representation, completely independent of all subjective elements, and all objective elements that are accidental, that is, pure objectivity, whereas it is mere manner when the peculiarity of the object to be represented suffers under the intellectual nature of the artist.

Thus Schiller's ideas had in a wonderful way come to coincide with Goethe's views on the nature of the beautiful. In the beautiful Goethe saw the truth or the typical in outward manifestation, while the freedom of outward manifestation, in the sense in which Schiller used the term, was to him a matter of course. Hence of style he is able to say nothing further than that it is the ability to represent the essence of things, that is, to speak with Schiller, pure objectivity. In this way the highest work of art became to him a work of nature, the product of necessity, something divine.

Since Goethe had gotten his views from separate, concrete observations in nature and art, which in turn found confirmation and support in his conception of the Universe-Deity permeating man and nature, while Schiller, on the other hand, had constructed his views out of abstract, esthetic theories, by a dialectic investigation of the idea of freedom and perfection, Schiller was justified in saying that this unexpected agreement was the more interesting as it had grown out of the most widely diverging points of view. Goethe's joy over their harmony of views on such important, fundamental questions was more than sufficient to obliterate the slight feeling of impatience which Schiller's scepticism with regard to the *Urpflanze* may have left behind. He had formed a most favourable opinion of Schiller both as a man and as a thinker.

Schiller was not willing to leave it to chance to decide when their friendly relations, for which the way was now prepared, should be still further strengthened. So he took a decisive step in order to melt away the last remnants of the ice which had been heaping up between them in past

years. After his strict, almost defiant, reticence for six years he felt that such a step would not be liable to misinterpretation. In a letter pulsating with warm feeling he confessed to Goethe the admiration with which he had watched for a long time the trend of his mind, and, with modest subordination of himself, characterised the nature and workings of Goethe's genius, with such sure and deep understanding that it moved Goethe to the depths of his soul. "For my birthday, which comes this week, I could have received no more agreeable present than your letter," he answered, adding the significant words that he counted a new epoch from the days they had spent together in Jena. Thus the bond was sealed, the most beautiful and the purest that ever existed between two great men who were rivals.

Many circumstances helped to increase the degree of intimacy which the bond of friendship was certain to assume because of mutual helpfulness. Not the least powerful of these was Goethe's growing isolation in Weimar. His old circle of friends was broken up. Years had changed him and his friends, but each still made the same demands of the other, and, as these were not met, displeasure stalked like a ghost through the one-time cordial society. Goethe still had Herder and Karl August, however. Then there came serious dissensions with Herder. In 1788, in order to hold Herder in Weimar, the Duke promised him money to pay for the education of his children. Herder did not seek to collect the stipend for a number of years, and then suddenly demanded the payment of all the arrearage. Goethe, who acted as a mediator, being for many reasons unable to approve this conduct, provoked Herder and his wife to the most extravagant invectives. They forgot all the favours that he had shown them, all the tokens of affection that he had given them through long years, things which they themselves had hitherto frequently acknowledged in pæans of gratitude. He was now nothing to them but a mean, heartless man, who treacherously exposed his friends. Although by their wavering affection Herder

and his wife had in the past brought many a bitter experience upon Goethe, the present experience surpassed by far anything that he would ever have expected of them. To Karoline, who in this affair wielded the pen for her husband, he wrote: "Perhaps you will be able for a moment to imagine how I must look upon your violent, passionate abuse, and upon your delusion that you are most completely in the right, as well as upon your fancy that nobody beside you has any idea of honour, compassion, or conscience. I shall allow you to hate me as a villain on the stage, but I beg you not to believe that I shall be converted in the fifth act. . . . I shall not read any rejoinder to this letter. . . . I know well that people will not thank one for the possible when they have demanded of him the impossible; but that shall not deter me from doing what I can for you and yours." This he did. With undiminished magnanimity he pacified the Duke, who was sorely offended by Herder's conduct, and brought about a suitable compromise, which, however, did not lessen the anger of the Herder household. What a painful thing it is to think that such a rare friendship, which had been for a quarter of a century a source of mutual inspiration to the highest intellectual achievements, should have come to such a petty end!

Goethe's relation to Karl August became perceptibly cooler, but did not come to a violent end. This was his only friendship that had not suffered from the Italian journey. After his return he had found Karl August, if anything, a warmer friend than before, and their life together on the field of war, in Silesia, in France, and before Mainz, had bound them together with the ties of old comrades. But later the bond began gradually to loosen. It may be that Karl August, owing to Goethe's having retired from business of state, and his own steadily growing independence, began to ask Goethe's advice less frequently, and that even in cases where Goethe expected it. Then, too, he may now and then have displayed the prince, a thing which had never happened before. It seems that one such scene, occasioned by affairs at the theatre in the

year 1796, aroused Goethe's passions to such a pitch that he wrote to Kirms: "For all our pains we have not a trace of gratitude to expect, neither from above nor from below, and in truth I see more clearly every day that the relation is wholly improper, especially for me."

The moment that Karl August let the prince be felt, that moment Goethe was resolved to treat him as such, and the old cordial familiarity vanished from his letters. He gave them a tone of friendly, respectful formality, and in the year 1798 we even find *Durchlaucht* taking the place of the simple *Sie* of former letters. Unconscious of his occasional moments of princely bearing toward Goethe, Karl August doubtless ascribed this change to a peculiarity in the poet's nature that had been brought out by the advance of years, and remarked jokingly to Knebel that it was ludicrous how solemn the man was getting. He on his part kept up the same old tone. But Goethe's more complete retirement into himself now began to be felt by the Duke, as well as by others, and caused even a man of his excellent judgment, who for so many years had been able to see into the deepest recesses of Goethe's heart, to misjudge his friend so far as to consider him an egoist. When Goethe realised the full significance of the fact that Karl August entertained such an opinion of him, the wound that it caused him must have been scarcely less painful than that occasioned by his rupture with Herder. Here again we see that tragic element which runs all through Goethe's apparently so sunny life.

The more Goethe's circle of friends in Weimar fell away from him, the more closely he became attached to Schiller, and the more joyously he drew Schiller to him. He received in the Swabian poet more than he had ever expected. Schiller compensated him for almost all that he had lost. A new, warm breath of spring passed over the fields of his life. In Italy thousands of seeds had been planted, but at home winter had soon set in and had buried everything under a deep covering of snow. The sun of Schiller's joy in creation melted the snow away and brought

on the spring, in which, according to Goethe's own confession, "everything began to sprout merrily side by side and the seeds and branches to burst forth with new life." Schiller's was a most energetic nature, which progressed rapidly. As he drove himself from one undertaking to another, so did he Goethe. By stimulating interest, by enticing, cheering, and pointing out the way, he drew from his friend a surprising wealth of most beautiful and most valuable works.[34] We behold a productivity such as we have observed only in the best years of Goethe's youth. Dramatic, epic, lyric, serious, humorous, satirical poems alternate with each other. The highest and the lowest subjects, the most vulgar and the most sublime, assume felicitous form under his magic touch. Every chord that he strikes responds with full, rich tones.

Schiller's inspiring interest extended far beyond the realm of poetry. He had a most helpful influence also on Goethe's scientific studies. Goethe says of him that not only did he grasp quickly the essential points of even so difficult a subject as the theory of colours, but when he himself, in his peculiar contemplative way, was about to halt, Schiller forced him, by his reflective, speculative faculty, to hasten forward, dragging him, as it were, to the goal. "What a great advantage your interest will prove to me, you will soon see, when on closer acquaintance you discover in me a kind of darkness and hesitation, which I cannot overcome" (August 27, 1794). This hope, which Goethe began to cherish immediately after their first friendly exchange of ideas, was fulfilled in rich measure, far beyond what he had expected.

We have already mentioned the fact that Schiller's spiritual power was independent of material things, and have quoted the words of Goethe, that nothing could embarrass him, nothing cramp him, and nothing lower the flight of his thoughts. Indeed, for the working of Schiller's mind it made little difference whether it was day or night, whether it was winter or summer, rain or sunshine, whether matters stood this way or that in politics,

intercourse, society, eating or drinking, dwelling or clothing ; in fact, even his physical state seemed to a certain degree almost a matter of indifference.

Contrast with him Goethe, who felt himself so dependent upon nature that he called himself a sensitive barometer, so influenced by numberless things, persons, and events, that, in so far as they opposed him, it always took a shock to liberate his spirit. How greatly Schiller's mind, to which every hindrance was but an appearance with no reality back of it, must have electrified him, who was so determined by the outer world! What refreshment, what elasticity he must have owed to his friend! When he intrusted himself to the wings of Schiller's spirit he must have felt himself borne aloft above the oppressive rush of earthly life into a higher atmosphere, where his genius was free to follow its own promptings. Thus he was enabled easily to overcome the restless commotions of contemporary events, which filled the decade of his friendship with Schiller.

Schiller's power of attraction would of itself have sufficed to bring Goethe to Jena often and for long visits; but the little university town had more to offer him. Jena now took up the rôle which Weimar had once played. It became the centre of German intellectual life. "There is here for the most part in all departments such a quick literary activity that one's head grows quite dizzy when one listens to it" (Goethe's letter to Knebel, March 2, 1797).

When one looks over the long list of eminent men who lived in Jena between 1794 and 1805, and includes among their number Goethe, who spent several months there almost every year, one may say with confidence that, with the exception of the Athens of Pericles, no city of the world has ever seen within its walls such an array of prominent productive minds. Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt, August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, Brentano, Tieck, Voss—where could the equal of this galaxy be found? They made Jena the home of classicism and the birthplace

of neo-Kantian philosophy and romanticism. In addition to these men we need to take into account, when thinking of Goethe, many eminent specialists, such as the anatomist Loder, the botanist Batsch, the jurist Hufeland and the professor of medicine Hufeland, the theologians Paulus and Griesbach, and the philosopher Niethammer, with whom it was equally beneficial for Goethe to work and converse. Amiable, intellectual women of fine temperament, such as Dorothea and Karoline Schlegel, Karoline Wolzogen, Karoline Paulus, and Sophie Mereau, were a fair ornament to the circle of serious men. The majority of the members of this circle were still young, very young, and took up, prosecuted, and defended everything with the fiery zeal of youth. Here Goethe was again animated by the same enthusiasm as before in the Storm-and-Stress period, and in Rome. Here no one made demands upon him as the Weimar of that day did; people were grateful for what he gave, they wondered at him, indeed they were happy even to see him and to come in contact with him. What wonder then that here, where nature unfolded greater charms than in Weimar, he should take up his abode for a long time every year, and still remain true to this habit, even after Schiller had moved to Weimar?

When Goethe and Schiller united for peaceful intellectual labour little did they think that they should soon be taking up arms to fight for a common cause. In former years neither of them had been averse to attacking an opponent, Schiller more incidentally, Goethe even seeking a feud. Now both of them had lost all pleasure in controversy. They had quietly advanced along their own great ways, thinking only of the completion of their works and of their own education. In Goethe's breast, however, there had been gradually accumulating a great store of anger, which was pressing to be vented. It did not come from the Parnassian realm, although the lukewarm bearing of the larger public toward *Iphigenie*, *Tasso*, and the *Faust*-fragment had not left him unmoved; it came rather from political and scientific regions. How he sought to ward

off the reactions of the French revolution in Germany by means of dramatic preventives, we have already seen. These attempts had failed, and hence his hope of their redeeming effect upon himself was also frustrated. To give vent to his political vexation he had gone over to the epic field and, in *Reineke Fuchs*, had sought to forget the squabbles of men before the merry mirror of the animal world.

But time heaped greater and greater pressure upon his soul. The accursed sans-culottic French gained victory upon victory: they reconquered the whole left bank of the Rhine; in 1795 they crossed the Rhine and threatened, the following year, to invade German territory as far east as Thuringia. Even under these conditions there were many educated men in Germany who, instead of uniting states and princes for defence, kept on writing and speaking of liberty and equality, thus inciting subjects against their rulers, and beginning internally to undermine the power of the states before their strength was sapped by the external foe. It was imperative that another attempt should be made, and this time with keener weapons, to check the offensive activity of such people.

Furthermore, Goethe was most highly indignant over the manner in which his scientific papers, particularly his contributions to the theory of colours, had been received. They were either ignored or haughtily rejected as the performance of a dilettante, and Goethe was given the friendly advice that as a general rule it is better for the cobbler to stick to his last.

At the end of 1795 he prepared to explode under the feet of his political and scientific adversaries a few mines that he had earlier laid in the *Venezianische Epigramme*, to which he now made some additions. Before these were publicly discharged he dealt the literary enemy a powerful blow. He had thought that he had presented the German people with many an estimable work, that he had made the German literature the peer of the best among modern literatures, and that he had developed the German language

to a higher degree of beauty and forcefulness than anybody before him had done. He had also felt that Lessing, Wieland, Herder, and Schiller had no cause to be ashamed either of the contents or of the form of their works. Suddenly a petty scribbler appeared in a Berlin periodical (March, 1795) bawling his regret that the Germans had so very few excellent works in classical prose. To be sure, it was here a question only of prose works, and at any other time Goethe would perhaps not have considered the criticism so unjust, or would have passed it by with a smile; but just at this time, when the political atmosphere was filled with ominous clouds, such a criticism appeared to him a most serious matter. It meant revolution carried into the literary field. He, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland were to be dethroned in order to make room for a crowd of pretenders to flaunt their stupidity and vulgarity. He seized his pen immediately and wrote a reply that spread consternation in the enemy's camp: "Not without a feeling of indignation will our readers run over the pages containing the passage referred to. They will very soon draw their own conclusions and heap deserved condemnation upon the real sans-culottism, the ill-bred presumption, with which they seek to crowd themselves into a circle of their betters, nay, to crowd out their betters and to seat themselves in their places." To these acrimonious words he added a fine presentation of the difficulty which the German experiences in producing anything classical. He says that important progress has nevertheless been made, so that a German who takes a cheerful and just view of the conditions finds the writers of his country on a high plane, and is convinced that the public will not allow itself to be misled by an ill-humoured caviller. Such people should be ostracised from society, he continues, laying under the ban of public contempt any one who dares speak of the lack of classical prose works. The title of the article in question is *Literarischer Sanskulottismus.*

Scarcely was one adversary dispatched, when new agitators arose against the Jena-Weimar sovereignty. They

spoke ill of *Die Horen*, which Schiller, aided by the best writers, and especially by Goethe, had been editing since the beginning of 1795. The criticisms were not so very severe, especially as they came from rival organs, nor were they so very unjustified, considering that but few of the articles in the periodical were what might have been expected of the great names attached to them. Still Goethe took great offence at them and urged Schiller to chastise the critics. Schiller sought to pacify him. "It seems to me we ought further to consider whether we shall always answer such platitudes. I should much prefer to invent some means whereby we could signify very plainly our own indifference toward them" (November 1, 1795). Goethe would not give up, for there were many other grievances of which he wished to unburden his heart.

With the banner of the sans-culottes was allied a very different one, that of the pious, who hated the Jena-Weimar supremacy as heathenism. In his preface to a recent translation of Plato's *Dialogues*, Goethe's friend Fritz Stolberg, the one-time hater of tyrants, who had now become very conservative and very zealous in the faith, had made an allusion to Goethe, as Goethe thought, and incidentally to Schiller, as heathen proselytes, and had in a measure questioned their ability "to perceive God in their hearts," because they did not recognise the necessity and the power of divine help and of prayer.

Goethe, who was conscious of perceiving God in every rock, was quite indignant at this narrow-minded piety, and as Stolberg had previously committed the sin of combating the philosophy of the world set forth in Schiller's *Die Götter Griechenlands*, and had spoken disparagingly of antique art as compared with Christian, Goethe was now minded "to turn in and thrash him." He hoped that over the shoulders of Stolberg he could strike the nonsensical injustice of the whole "bigoted crowd," of which his own brother-in-law had become a member.

On looking over his scientific papers he was again seized with indignation; this time at the scholars' guild, which

continued to be either silent or obdurate toward his theory of colours. He felt determined and compelled to declare war on them, but a campaign confined to the explosion of a few small mines, such as the *Venezianische Epigramme*, now seemed to him too tame. He must bombard their whole camp this time in order to punish them soundly for their "renitence and reticence."

Again Schiller sought to quiet him, calmly uttering the truthful words: "It never was otherwise and never will be otherwise" (November 23, 1795). But as Goethe clung to his purpose and was unwilling to carry on the fight alone, and as Schiller had been considerably angered by the failure of *Die Horen*, and by many personal attacks, he decided to march to the field with Goethe; and, as it was the nature of his mind to file his thoughts down to a keener point than Goethe, he wielded the more cutting blade of the two in the real clash of arms.

To these two men it would have seemed too petty to limit the fight which they proposed to engage in to those who had done them some direct injury. The personal reckoning was, rather, to be but one link in a great chain, as the campaign was to cover as much territory as possible. Every form of perversity, whether political or literary, philosophical or theological, scientific or artistic, every compromise, every lack of character, everything insipid was haled before the bar of this court. And in order that the punishment might be keenly felt, the prisoners at the bar were characterised as clearly as possible, not infrequently by the direct mention of their names.

Of Goethe's former friends the two Stolbergs, Lavater, Jung-Stilling, and Parson Ewald, at whose wedding he had sung the beautiful song *In allen guten Stunden*, were delivered to the scaffold, all on account of their narrow and, as Goethe felt, intolerant orthodoxy; Lavater in addition because of his calculating disposition, his self-satisfaction, and his self-deception, with which his prophetic powers became more and more affected. Of his present friends, if one may use this word in speaking of a one-sided friend-

ship, Reichardt, the composer of the felicitous music to many of Goethe's songs, was thrown among the condemned. What cost him his head was less his officiousness than his propagation of the ideas of the French revolution. The blows fell thickest upon the old Berlin adversary Nicolai, although he had long ago lost his influence. But the target was a grateful one, and, as a representative of that insipid Philistinism which showed its lack of understanding by the stand it took against the classic writers, he was a perennial type. The elder Gleim was deplorably mocked; even Klopstock and Wieland were slightly ridiculed. On the whole there were, in addition to large groups of people, about eighty individual persons who were made to feel the anger of the Dioscuri.[35] Beside the blows there were also garlands of praise, bestowed, to be sure, upon very few people, the half of whom were already dead: upon Lessing and Shakespeare, upon Kant and Voss—upon the latter because of his *Luise*.

The form they chose was the distich of the antique epigram, of which Goethe had already made effective use; the name which they chose, showing felicitous humour, was *Xenien* (xenia), after the model of Martial, and as the place of publication, Schiller's *Musenalmanach* for the year 1797. For seven months the two "mighty men" took great comfort in preparing their satirical girandoles, which in the autumn of 1796 shot up like a thousand rockets and fire-balls before the eyes of nonplussed Germany. It was a brilliant display of fire-works, but not much more. When the last piece had exploded things still remained as they had been before. What the two Dioscuri were combating was symptoms of great intellectual movements and tendencies. Such things can be averted only by means of stronger positive counter-movements, not by paper darts. Epigrams are a very inefficient means of curing insipidity and bad taste, to say nothing of overthrowing Newton's theory of colours and gaining respect for the learned writings of a poet.

The number of enemies grew larger rather than smaller.

The Goethe and Schiller Statue at Weimar

Out of new currents of thought grew new adversaries. The personal acrimony which Goethe and Schiller had evinced in their attacks was soon avenged on them, for the polemical writings of their enemies, both old and new, also began to bristle with sharp personalities. In all his life Goethe never experienced attacks more bitter than those during the decades following the *Xenien*. He was subjected to the most venomous criticism, even concerning his private life, his address, and his gestures. The younger generation was very slow to realise that the literary broom had not only stirred up a dust, but had also swept dust away.

Soon after the appearance of the *Xenien* Goethe recognised that, wholly apart from the question of their effectiveness or ineffectiveness, about which he could form no judgment in so short a time, they were very little in keeping with the high position which he and Schiller occupied in the world, and with their great calling as poets. In a letter to Schiller he calls them a crazy venture, and says that they must both now devote themselves exclusively to great and worthy works of art, and, in order to put all enemies to shame, must change their Protean nature into forms that are noble and good. And yet, when one low, vulgar reply followed another, his Mephistophelian vein again asserted itself and he was determined once more to tear and shake the enemies till he had "vexed them thoroughly." This time the xenia were to be distributed during the merry revelry in celebration of Oberon's golden wedding, and were to be in the form of lightly flowing doggerel. The pleasantry was intended for the next *Musenalmanach*, but Schiller, with correct tact, refused to accept it; he was desirous of putting an end to controversy. Goethe, however, had fallen so deeply in love with the beautiful masquerade that he preserved it, made further additions to it, and then gave it a permanent resting-place in *Faust*. There it did not appear in print till eleven years later, when for both poet and reader the characters no longer had any significance except as types.

In the composition of this little Aristophanic comedy

Goethe had given sufficient play to his desire for combat to permit him with unburdened heart to retire with Schiller to the proud intellectual height from which they could henceforth look down with silent contempt or serene smiles upon the tumult of the pigmies in the lowland. This bearing, which was the only one worthy of the poet-princes, pleased no one better than Frau Aja, and her excellent words, which bear the marks of a belated criticism of a great part of the *Xenien*, may fittingly close this chapter. In April, 1804, she wrote to her son: "It gives me unspeakable joy that Schiller and you do not answer a single word to all the fiddle-faddle of reviewers' nonsense and the idle tattle of gossips; the deuce take them and their trash! It is splendid of you. . . . Continue this good behaviour for ever. Your works will remain throughout eternity, while this miserable trash falls to pieces in one's hands.—Period!"

VIII

WILHELM MEISTERS LEHRJAHRE

Success of *Werther* leads Goethe to undertake another autobiographical novel—History of the inception of *Wilhelm Meister*—Original programme of the work—Significance of the title—Change of programme—The ultimate aim of the novel—History of the completion of the work—Analysis of the plot of the first book: Wilhelm at variance with his father—His love affair with Mariane—Solution of his difficulties retarded—Acts as a peace-maker in the Melina affair—Episodes showing his great love-passion for Mariane—His discovery of her *liaison* with Norberg—End of the first book—The man of the world and the poet—Analysis of the next six books: Wilhelm drawn into a theatrical career—He finances Melina's company—Mignon and the Harpist—The troupe at the Count's castle—Wilhelm's social standing at the castle—His introduction to Shakespeare—He changes his style of dress—The company attacked by highway robbers—Wilhelm wounded—The beautiful Amazon—Wilhelm is offered a position at a theatre in a large city—Performance of *Hamlet*—Wilhelm's wavering—He reads *The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*—Effect on him—Critical appendix to the *Confessions*—Purpose of the *Confessions*—The man of action—Lothario and Therese—Many past secrets disclosed—The work of the secret organisation—Wilhelm's apprenticeship ended—Results of his education in the school of experience—He plans to marry—The eighth book of the novel—Natalie, the perfect personality—Death of Mignon and the Harpist—Further mysteries solved—The end—Unsatisfactoriness of the ending—Way prepared for a continuation—Theory of the novel in Goethe's time—Goethe's theory based largely on *Werther* and Wieland's *Agathon*—In what sense Wilhelm is Goethe's double—Goethe's subjective needs supplied by creating the character—Reception of the novel—Schiller's enthusiasm over it—Realism in the novel—Lack of local colour—Delineation of the characters—Figures are genuine German types of that day—Archaic form of the novel—Its enduring substance.

MERCK and other friends had often said to Goethe: "What thou livest is better than what thou writest." In *Werther* he had written what he had lived and had achieved a tremendous success. What a

challenge to him further to communicate his life! What strong support this challenge received from the passionate interest which the world took in the writer of *Werther!* Had he not reason to hope that the world would hail with gratitude the story of how this writer had come to be what he was, and also to hope that such a representation would have a general, and hence artistic, value enduring far beyond the satisfaction of momentary and personal interests? He had often learned by experience, and a few years later expressly declared, that his life was very symbolical, and that what he experienced was merely an intensified picture of what thousands of others experienced in the same or different form. In this way he was able to explain to himself the above words of his friends, and the effect of *Werther*, of which the first part was a most faithful reproduction of reality. In short, we see him, after *Werther*, more thoroughly convinced than ever of the poetic value of his experiences. He would now gladly perpetuate all his experiences in literary monuments, not alone by pouring the content of his own life into foreign fables, but also by simple, direct description.

Hardly had he arrived in Weimar when he promised his friends to write for them the story of his last year in Frankfort, if they would keep him in the humour. When a few months had gone by in his new home he wished the history of these months might be described. "That would be something for good people to nibble at" (February 19, 1776). He postponed the portrayal of these particular episodes because he hoped to be able to weave them into a greater whole. It is very probable that he even then had planned the writing of comprehensive memoirs, if he had not already made a beginning. Soon after the publication of *Werther* (on the 21st of November, 1774) he wrote to Kestner and his wife, who still bore a grudge against him: "Within a year from now I promise you that I shall wipe out in the most kindly, most unique, and most sincere way whatever there may still be left of suspicion, misinterpretation, etc., among the

gossiping public, as a pure north wind drives away fog and haze."

How else was he to do this than by means of an autobiographical novel, in which the harmonious close of his relation to Lotte and Kestner should be echoed in its purity and beauty? A year later Goethe's secretary, Philipp Seidel, wrote to a friend: "I am now copying a novel, of which my master is the author. I am at a passage which affords me heavenly delight, and in these circumstances I want to write to you, although I am greatly urged to finish it." Can it be that this novel vanished without leaving a trace, and that there was no connection between it and the one Goethe had in mind in his letter to the Kestners? Furthermore, may there not be threads leading from the novel promised in 1774, and in process of writing in 1775, to *Wilhelm Meister*, the beginnings of which must have been in existence as early as 1776? Considering that in *Die Geschwister*, which was written in October, 1776, the lovers are called Wilhelm and Mariane, and Wilhelm is by occupation a merchant, who would doubt that these names and this station in life are borrowed from the pair of lovers in the first book of *Wilhelm Meister*? Indeed, who would not infer from the very fact that Goethe noted in his diary on the 16th of February, 1777, "Dictated in the garden on *Wilhelm Meister*," that the beginnings of this novel must go back at least to the year 1776? Whoever is convinced of this, and at the same time knows how little time the Storm and Stress of the year 1776 left for literary composition will not easily avoid the assumption that the foundations of the great novel had already been laid in Frankfort.

It is possible that Goethe first thought of *Wilhelm Meister* merely as a history of his life, without any further tendency. We know that he himself said of the finished work, mindful as he was of the manner in which he had later sought to add to it: "I should think that a rich and manifold life which passes before our eyes were something in itself, without any pronounced tendency." And yet

it is probable that in the choice which he made of the events of his life—for, as an artist and a passionate young man he could not wish to produce a mere chronicle—he aimed to give the work a definite tendency. Whoever in youth surveys his past life does so with the hope of gaining from the retrospect confidence and assurance for the future, and confirmation of his soul's most secret, most cherished ambition. Werther had gone to ruin—why had not the author, who had endowed Werther with the fundamental features of his own character? Because faith in his mission as a poet had fortified him against the adversities of life. Would this faith still further stand the test? Had he really a mission as a poet, such as he believed he had, and such as he had painted in *Hans Sachsens poetische Sendung?* These two questions had occupied young Goethe constantly, and the success of *Werther* had answered them in a way which made him most happy. What a stimulus it gave him to lay out for himself and the world the course of this mission, and to draw therefrom a Cæsarian confidence that he should be victorious!

His own inward need, the desire of the public, and the sure expectation of artistic success, together composed an extraordinarily strong stimulus, and, as we know, brought *Wilhelm Meister* into the world. The name under which Goethe masked in the novel was very characteristically chosen. Wilhelm was the baptismal name of the great British poet,[36] whom he had celebrated as the Will of all Wills, and who was a brilliant guiding star both for himself and his poetic reflection, and by the name Meister Wilhelm was characterised from the beginning as one whose brow had been kissed by the Muse and whose mission consisted but in faithfully and diligently developing his inborn mastership and using it to overcome all hindrances. "Thou wilt be a master," the genius had whispered consolingly to the young poet.

Wolfgang Goethe changed himself into Wilhelm Meister, the jurist into a typical business man, a merchant. He disguised himself still further, less perhaps for the sake of

the agreeable incognito than out of consideration for the artistic advantages which it offered. The aim in life which he gave his hero, who was to represent him in the novel, was not to be a poet, but an actor, and this is the way the work came by its title *Wilhelm Meisters theatralische Sendung*. It was only in a later phase of its development that *theatralische Sendung* was changed to *Lehrjahre*. In Goethe's soul, however, there made itself felt with such irresistible power the need of expressing through his hero, in a most direct way, and without any symbolism,—which never covers a subject quite adequately—his innermost poetic sorrows, conflicts, and ideals, that he could not help giving Wilhelm, along with his talent as an actor and his passion for the theatre, an unusual measure of poetic gift and longing to be a poet, which, to be sure, caused no inconsiderable disturbance in the economy of the work.

Such were the main outlines, when the removal to Weimar occurred. This transfer of residence gave matters an unexpected turn. Goethe had really entered upon a stage, the political stage, where he attempted to play a rôle. He himself was fond of speaking of his official career in these terms. The title received a more apt significance in the picture than before, but the problem of his life, and hence of the novel based upon his life, was shifted. The poetic mission, in which Goethe had believed, was crowded to one side. It seemed to be an error, or only a partial truth. And how about the new mission, that of a statesman? Was it the truth or was it in turn an error? First he believed in the truth, then in the error, till the error became a complete certainty. What was back of this error was anything but clear to him when he crossed the Alps in 1786. Hence, after Wilhelm's calling as an actor had become a symbol of Goethe's political calling, it was not possible at that time to carry the novel beyond the middle of this error, that is, the middle of Wilhelm's professional career as an actor. As a matter of fact it progressed no further in the ten years from 1776 to 1786. Goethe could not reach any decision as to the continuation

until he received suggestions from his own experience. Until toward the end of his sojourn in Italy his mind remained very uncertain on the subject. He came under the power of a new delusion when he fancied himself called to be a painter. Only after this delusion had been dispelled did his wavering cease. With greater self-assurance than ever before, he recognised that he was a poet, and determined henceforth to live only as a poet. He also recognised the high value of his errors. They had helped him acquire an education which he could never have attained by following a straight course. With this knowledge he preferred not to revive Wilhelm's calling as an actor in the original sense and carry it as a mission to a victorious end, but to let it prove to have been an error, thus following the course of his own political and artistic endeavours. The original programme had been to carry the actor through all his errors and hindrances to the fulfilment of his "theatrical mission"; the new programme which he adopted was to lead the man through errors and hindrances to a universal, harmonious education.[37] The mission became an apprenticeship. The outwardly and inwardly well educated man took the place of the successful man in a particular calling. Mastery of universal humanity superseded mastery of a profession.

High as the new plan towered above the old one, it was not yet the highest point to be reached. The mastery of universal humanity is in itself but a force at rest. It acquires its full value only when put into action, into action for humanity. Here the final aim of the novel was reached, the height to which, according to the old plan, there was no prospect of rising. When Goethe became enlightened concerning his false strivings and the way of the future, he also felt the possibility of finishing *Wilhelm Meister*. He was now able to close his own apprenticeship and that of Wilhelm.

In February, 1788, we receive his first definite statement: "Thus much I know, that I shall *subito* finish the writing of *Wilhelm*, when the eight volumes [of his collected writings

then in the process of publication] have been completed." At the end of 1789 the eight volumes were done; but unexpected postponements were occasioned by his journeys to Venice and Silesia, by the French revolution, the campaign in France, the siege of Mainz, and by his studies in natural science. The year 1794 came, and still the work was not visibly advanced. Then he resolved to force himself to complete it. He sold the novel to the bookseller Unger, in order that he might be obliged to deliver the manuscript within a definite period. The immediate result was a more rapid redaction of the first half of the work, that is, of the first four books. It is very doubtful whether the effect of the remedy fulfilled his expectations after he reached the point where it became a question of new creation. Fortunately his friendship with Schiller had meanwhile been formed, and Schiller's active and stimulating interest and his enthusiasm over every finished part, his suggestions, demands, and exhortations kept Goethe hard at work. On the 11th of February, 1795, he had finished the fourth book; on the 18th he wrote to his friend: "Animated by the good courage with which our recent conversation inspired me, I have already worked out the scheme of the fifth and sixth books." But the fifth book, in which the transition was to be made from the old structure to the new, gave him great difficulty. He laid it aside for a moment longer to let it first mature in his mind, while he proceeded to finish the sixth book, the *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*. In July the problem of the fifth book was solved, and by the middle of the following year the whole vast structure was complete. At the same time that he was forging his murderous *Xenien*, passionately eager for the fray, he was also working at the most gentle, most peaceful, most ethereal books of his *Wilhelm Meister*. Such great contrasts could exist side by side only in such a universal mind as his.

The reconstruction of the first half of the novel cannot have been a small undertaking. It demanded the very closest attention, if the older parts were to be perfectly fitted into the new plan. As it is not in the nature of any

poet, least of all Goethe, to concentrate his attention so perfectly, we need not wonder if we come upon flaws and unpolished spots. In the first place there was a considerable portion to be stricken out of the beginning. Following his original plan, Goethe, as we know from Herder, had told the story of the hero's life from childhood up, and we were already well acquainted with him when we met him in his relations to Mariane. Goethe's refined artistic sense could not be satisfied with such a representation, rising in a straight line and tarrying so long over the immature years before Wilhelm had learned to exercise his own free powers. He concentrated his efforts upon the years of conscious, mature manhood, and let these begin the moment that Wilhelm, with independent determination, sought to shape his own fate. To be sure, the poet was unwilling to sacrifice entirely the youthful history so dear to him. He felt that he ought to rescue from the common grave, to which he consigned the introductory portions, the boy's interest in the puppet play and his theatrical attempts, which served to account for Wilhelm's invincible longing for the theatre. But, in spite of all the devices to which he resorted to keep us from noticing the length of these youthful reminiscences, which he narrated with much fervour, he was finally obliged himself to pronounce, in a most good-natured way, his adverse criticism on them, by letting Mariane gently fall asleep over these stories of her lover. In other respects the first book of the novel in its new form is full of dramatic life, although the poet had undertaken to weave into the progressing action an exposition reaching out in all directions.

After the performance at the theatre the beautiful and much-praised actress Mariane returns to her room and finds there a package from her lover Norberg, who has been away on a journey. The presents which the package contains give her go-between maid Barbara the greatest joy, but arouse in her own breast the most violent and most conflicting emotions. For during the absence of Norberg,

her generous gallant, she has inwardly given him up and feels drawn to Wilhelm in pure, deep love. Norberg is rich, whereas Wilhelm receives but a scanty allowance from his father. And an actress has many needs. Norberg is to return in a fortnight—what shall her decision be? A conflict between Wilhelm and Mariane is foreshadowed.

Immediately we receive hints of another conflict in which Wilhelm has become involved. His father is dissatisfied with his frequent attendance at the theatre, and says that it is a useless waste of time and money. "Is everything that does not bring immediate returns in money useless?" rejoins Wilhelm excitedly. The father declares that very soon he will forbid his going to the theatre. Wilhelm's idealism is contrasted with his father's utilitarianism, the twenty-two-year-old son's longing for freedom with the father's harsh and narrow-minded exercise of parental authority.

The contrast between father and son is still wider, as we shall soon see. Wilhelm has a strong aversion to the calling of a merchant, which his father has forced him to choose. Since early youth he has cherished the ideal of becoming an actor and a poet. To all these accumulated grounds of conflict is now added Wilhelm's relation to Mariane, which engages his whole soul. He is minded to take the full and serious consequences of this relation and marry Mariane. He may never hope to receive his father's permission to take this step, and so, after mature deliberation, decides to run away. Flight is to give him freedom, his beloved, and the fairest calling in life. His father even seems to make it easier for him to carry out his purposes. Wilhelm is to go on a long business journey in order the better to fit himself to be a merchant. From this business journey it is his determination never to return.

Thus matters press toward a decision in all directions: between Mariane and Norberg, Mariane and Wilhelm, Wilhelm and his father. To allow this decision to occur at once would have been well suited to the purposes of a dramatist or a short-story writer, but not to those of a novelist. It is not the aim of the novelist to close the

circle quickly, but to widen it out; it is not his function to present merely the brief, intense moments in the life of a single character or a few individuals; it is for him to portray long periods of development in the lives of many. He needs for his picture not merely developments, but also conditions, not merely characters, but things as well. He aims to produce a world-picture, not merely a single, or a few soul-pictures. It is not his purpose to rush the reader on in breathless haste to the end, for that would exhaust the reader's power of endurance in the middle of a long-drawn-out novel; he aims to allow a breathing spell after each exciting moment. The reader is not to be merely interested, held in suspense; he must also take comfort in reading.

Thus Goethe, with true artistic instinct, retards the action at the point where the way is prepared for the final outcome. This retardation of the action is so cleverly planned and so well executed that, even if it had no significance in the structure of the novel, we should linger over it with pleasure.

Even the manner in which it is introduced is very felicitous. Wilhelm needs a horse for his business journey. His father and his father's partner are so rich that they can well afford to buy a horse for him, but as practical business men they decide, after a long conversation, which reflects the two men like a mirror, to procure one in a more advantageous way. A shop-keeper in H—, who is unable to pay what he owes them, is to give them a horse to satisfy their claim, and Wilhelm is to go for it. Wilhelm finds the shop-keeper's family in great confusion. The daughter has eloped with an actor named Melina. The authorities have already been summoned to capture the fugitives. Wilhelm receives his horse and rides thoughtfully homeward on the following day.

At the boundary of the little country he sees approaching a peasant's cart, escorted by a guard of citizens, who are ridiculous rather than fear-inspiring. In the cart sit the unhappy lovers on a few bundles of straw,—Melina in

chains. In advance of them rides a clumsy town clerk, who surrenders the prisoners with solemn gestures and formalities to the actuary of the neighbouring state and a squad of awkward militia. Wilhelm is immediately seized with profound sympathy for the pair of lovers, forgets all about the continuation of his journey, hastens to the judge in the nearest town in order to dispose him favourably toward the prisoners, and attends the trial.

The judge is thrown out of one embarrassment into another, as it is absolutely impossible for the clerk to take down the testimony of the girl, whose pure heart pours forth such a torrent of noble, triumphant feeling. The continuation of the hearing becomes more and more painful to Wilhelm, when he sees the tenderest secrets dragged into publicity. He suffers the same agony of soul as the girl and urges the judge to bring matters to an end, since everything is as clear as it can possibly be. The judge allows himself to be persuaded and the two evil-doers are again put under guard, in order that they may be transported to H— on the following morning. Wilhelm has secretly resolved to return with them, in order to induce the parents to give their consent to the marriage of their daugther to Melina. Meanwhile he encourages the prisoner Melina in the courthouse, speaks of his purpose to intercede in his behalf, and also offers to procure for him a new position with a troupe of actors. Melina declines this offer with thanks, saying that if it were possible he would prefer not to return to the theatre, for in order to remain with the theatre one must have a skin as thick as a bear that is led about by a chain in company with monkeys and dogs, and whipped to make it dance to the tune of a bagpipe for the amusement of children and the populace.

On hearing these declarations Wilhelm felt as though he had fallen from the clouds. Was that the true aspect of his ideal? But he soon found an explanation of the matter. It was not the fault of the profession that Melina judged it so, but of Melina himself, who had taken it up as a common trade. This knowledge did not hinder him

from approaching the parents of the girl on the following morning, as he had determined to do, and making with them a strong plea for the fugitives. His intercession was successful and he again entered upon his homeward journey with a heart at rest.

How much we have been able to learn from this retarding episode! We have cast a glance into the petty territorial divisions and red-tapism which held the citizens in close, hard, ridiculous bonds, and we are now able to understand from this side Wilhelm's longing to get out into a world in which one led, apparently at least, a freer and more worthy existence. At the same time Wilhelm's idealism has been forcibly brought out in two ways. Sympathy with unfortunates leads him to turn aside without hesitation from what is really his first business, from his nearest duty; and his high conception of the stage, of the task of the actor, is not in the least lowered by the descriptions of one experienced in stage life. In comparison with these purposes of the episode, it seems to us almost of secondary importance that it introduces Wilhelm's acquaintance with Melina and his wife, which is not to be without significance in Wilhelm's further career. Finally, the episode has still another favourable after-effect. By his chivalrous kindness Wilhelm has won over hearts completely, and thus, instead of having turned our attention away from the main action, it brings us back to it with a stronger interest.

Meanwhile Norberg has arrived, and we expect the conflict between Wilhelm and Mariane to be decided immediately. But the poet still delays, and with perfect right. The approaching catastrophe was to put an end not only to Wilhelm's love, but also to his flight and his plans for the future, and was to shake his whole being to its very depths. For that purpose it was necessary to let us see and feel his love in all its self-assurance, warmth, and majesty. Hitherto this had been done but imperfectly, although more than one opportunity had offered itself. Indeed, more than one occasion had seemed to make it

imperative. The poet had purposely postponed it, because it would be certain to produce its full effect only if reserved till immediately before the catastrophe. When the time was ripe he painted the scene with all the power of his great art.

We are first shown the extraordinary firmness of Wilhelm's faith in Mariane, in three different situations. His friend young Werner, engaged with him in their fathers' business, a clear-headed, sober man of the world, has heard of Mariane's relation to Norberg, and sounds Wilhelm an earnest warning. In vain. Everything that speaks against her is only an appearance of evil. Mariane pretends not to understand Wilhelm's allusions to a marriage. He sees in this nothing but a most beautiful evidence of modest, unselfish love. When he approaches her lovingly and expectantly on the decisive evening she compels him to withdraw, pretending that she is ill. He goes away obediently and unsuspectingly. His confidence is still unbroken.

This confidence, this faith, springs from the feeling that he has become completely one with Mariane, from the feeling that love for her is to him the breath of life, that in her rests his happiness in the present and in the future. The letter in which Wilhelm asks her hand on the day of the catastrophe serves to show us the strength and depth of his passion. "Accept it, this hand, receive solemnly this token, superfluous though it be. All the joys of love we have already experienced, but there are new delights in the confirmation of the idea of endurance. . . . Oh, my beloved! Lives there a man so fortunate as I, who unites all his wishes in one? No sleep comes to my eyes, and, like a perpetual dawn, thy love and thy happiness rise before me. . . . As on thy heart I have been able to feel that thou dost love, so I also seize the shining thought and say—I will not say it, but I will hope—that we shall some day appear to men as a pair of good spirits to open their hearts, stir their souls, and prepare for them heavenly pleasures. . . ."

Even these confessions do not seem to the poet sufficient

for his purpose. Wilhelm's passion must reveal itself much more directly to us. A love scene, such as might have been inserted, he scorns; he chooses another way, a way such as only genius can invent. When Mariane sends Wilhelm home in the evening, as he is about to hand her his letter, he snatches quickly her neckcloth, in order that he may thus, at least, bring his beloved maiden near to him. Then he goes home. But neither in his room, nor in society, is he able to possess himself in patience. He rushes out again and runs up and down the streets. A stranger accosts him and asks him the way to a hotel. Wilhelm takes him to the hotel and accepts his invitation to come in and have a glass of punch. They strike up a conversation, from which Wilhelm learns that the stranger is the man who had once negotiated the sale of his grandfather's art collections. Wilhelm, as a ten-year-old boy, had looked on with heavy heart as the fine collections of paintings, marbles, bronzes, coins, and carved stones went away from the house. "Those were the first sad days of my life." It was the will of his father, who considered that the money would be better invested in business enterprises. Wilhelm still remembers with special vividness a picture of a sick prince, who is languishing away in unhappy love for the betrothed of his father. "How I pitied, how I still pity, a young man who is forced to suppress within him the sweet impulses, the most beautiful heritage that nature has given us, and to conceal within his bosom the fire which should be warming and animating him and others, instead of consuming his inmost being and causing him untold suffering!"

How portentous this is of his own impending fate! But it cannot have been for the purpose of giving us such an impression that Goethe introduced the meeting with the stranger, which arouses our impatience and repugnance, coming as it does at the critical moment toward which we see the situation hastening. Neither can it have been his desire to make us acquainted with the contrast between the father's lack of artistic sense and Wilhelm's early in-

clination toward art, which, according to the later plan, was doubtless intended to prepare the way for many things. This contrast could have been brought out in many other connections. He was guided by other motives. In the course of the conversation Wilhelm lets fall the word "fate." His companion takes it up immediately and remarks: "I am very sorry indeed to hear again the word 'fate' from the lips of a young man, who is just at an age when one is accustomed to construe his strong inclinations as the will of higher beings."

How these words must have set Wilhelm to meditating! In his love for Mariane he had fancied he saw the "finger of fate" directing him to tear himself away from the "stagnation and tedium of civil life." He had ascribed his strong inclination toward the theatre to the will of a higher power. When, then, immediately after this serious conversation, which was well calculated to cool his ardour, Wilhelm again lapsed into the delirium of an enraptured lover, we receive a vivid conception of his all-absorbing passion, such as we could have derived in no other way. This, in our opinion, was the real reason in Goethe's mind for inserting this episode. It had also the further advantage of occupying the time until night, which was to find Wilhelm still in the street.

Even after he parts from the stranger, Wilhelm does not go home. Hearing travelling musicians in the street he engages them for a serenade in front of Mariane's house. What a contrast! The music which the noble-minded lover provides in honour of his sweetheart is enjoyed by her other lover, the worldling, who listens to it in Mariane's arms. And while this worldling is upstairs receiving all the favours which Wilhelm was wont to enjoy, the music entices from Wilhelm's soul the tones of tenderest love, which incense-like rise in honour of his beloved: "Even though we be thus apart, we are bound together by these melodies, as in every separation by the most tender emotion of love. Ah! two hearts that love each other are like two magnetic clocks; whatever moves the one must move the

other with it; for it is one power that works in both." His soliloquy ends. He arises from the bench upon which he has been lying, embraces a tree standing in the square before her house, and cools his cheek on its bark. Then he kisses the threshold upon which Mariane's foot has trod, the knocker on the door which her hand has touched. And again he sits down. His thoughts refuse to be turned away from his beloved. They are as pleasant as "the spirits of twilight, . . . love runs its quivering hand a thousand times over all the chords of his soul; it seems as though the spheres stood mute above him, suspending their ethereal song to listen to the soft melodies of his heart."

Finally he decides to go home. At the corner he turns around once more. He must at least cast one parting glance at the roof beneath which his beloved dwells. Then it seems to him that the door opens and a man comes out, and vanishes again in the darkness. He stands as though rooted to the spot. He knows not whether he has seen rightly or has been deceived. And only when it is broad daylight—a clever stroke of the author—do the terrible phantoms depart from his soul. Then he staggers slowly home. He has almost entirely restored his peace of mind after the vision of the night, and thinks to drive away the last remnant of torturing doubt by means of Mariane's neckcloth. He raises it to his lips. At this moment a note from Norberg falls out. It discloses his intimacy with Mariane and characterises him as an easy-going sensualist of the commonest type. And Wilhelm had been obliged to make way for him!—Goethe adds not a word about the immediate effect of the letter; we merely see Wilhelm with the paper in his hand sink overwhelmed to the floor.

Thus closes the first book, in which Goethe combines most beautifully the soft fusion of colours of his Werther period with the firm lines of the art of characterisation of which he in Italy became a master.

In the case of the following books we can be more brief, after we become acquainted with the artistic construction of the ground-plan.

Wilhelm is overwhelmed. He feels that his whole life is ruined. He falls seriously ill, and after his recovery bids farewell to his love illusion and to his dreams of future happiness as an actor and a writer. He does not even care to be reminded of these ideal pictures of life, and so consigns the dear documents of his love and all his literary attempts to the fire. To his friend Werner, who wishes to rescue the compositions from an untimely end in the flames, he signifies his intention of giving up a trade for which he was not born. He says that Werner is wrong in thinking that one can produce a work of literary value in odd hours snatched here and there from other duties. "No, the poet must have his whole life to himself, must live wholly in the objects that delight him. His inward life is most bountifully endowed by heaven, he guards within his breast an ever increasing treasure, and his outward life must also be undisturbed, and must permit him to enjoy his treasures in that quiet happiness which a rich man vainly seeks to produce about him by means of his hoarded wealth. Look at men, how they run after happiness and pleasure! Their wishes, their toil, their money are running an endless race, and toward what goal? They are seeking to attain to that which the poet has received from nature,—the right enjoyment of the world, the feeling of one's self in others, a harmonious grouping about one's self of many, often incompatible things." "While the man of the world drags out his days in strength-sapping melancholy over a great loss, or goes to meet his fate in unrestrained joy, the impressionable, lightly-stirred spirit of the poet moves on, like the revolving sun, from night to day, and with soft transitions tunes his harp to joy or woe. The fair flower of wisdom springs up from his heart, its native soil; and whereas others dream in their waking hours and are annoyed by the hideous phantoms of every deluding sense, he lives the dream of life as one waking, and the strangest of incidents is to him a part both of the past and of the future. Thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, and a friend of gods and men."

Wilhelm continues for some time longer to extemporise to his friend on this wise. We listen with Werner astonished, though not for the same reason. A man who speaks thus is conscious of his powers, not alone as an actor, but above all as a poet, and to him the poet's calling is a thing so noble, great, and holy, that by the side of it every other calling, even that of the actor, is insignificant. And yet Wilhelm will follow the actor's calling and will give himself up to it, as though compelled by some force of nature. What a revelation it was when the growing power of his passion, hitherto hid beneath the surface, but drawing secret nourishment from the author's own breast, suddenly burst through its covering! But when the author allowed his hero to pass from enthusiasm for the poet's calling to lamentations over his lost love, and brought back to life his longing to be an actor only after he had entered into new and very remote surroundings, he himself scarcely noticed how far he had deviated, for the time being, from the prescribed lines of his composition.

In order thoroughly to stifle the idealistic impulses of his soul Wilhelm throws himself into business activities with a kind of obstinate rage, so that nobody is more zealous in the counting house or on 'change. How is this Wilhelm ever to return to the stage? The author is compelled to make an entirely new beginning. Under the completely altered conditions the transition must take place quietly, slowly, and as though it had not been planned. Meanwhile this casual drifting into a theatrical career gives us the best possible opportunity to follow distinctly the various stages in the many-sided unfolding and development of Wilhelm's character,—and, as we know, the author's new plan was to write an educational novel.

First three years are allowed to go by. The painful impressions of the past must fade out of Wilhelm's memory before he can be susceptible to new impressions. After the expiration of this period the firm of Werner and Meister decides a second time to send Wilhelm out as a commercial traveller. On his route he passes through an industrial

village, where factory hands give a performance of a play. He later visits a small city, in which he again meets actors. He goes on an excursion to a mill, and there travelling miners produce a little scene. His old fondness for the theatre is aroused before he is aware.

One might feel inclined to say that the author has made rather too large use of chance in bringing Wilhelm back to an actor's life, but a little closer inspection will reveal the fact that he has drawn only upon the profoundest depths of human nature. Ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων, says Heraclitus,—"The character of a man is his fate." Whoever has a definite passion, a strong peculiar interest, will everywhere find something to satisfy it. As yet Wilhelm has not for a single moment thought of attaching to these coincidences any significance for his further career in life. His only thought is to finish his business journey and return home as a faithful son and employee. Hence some strong new attachments must be formed to bind him to the new sphere.

As attendance at plays and association with players is not in itself enough to hold him, some of the players themselves, such as pretty, amiable, but frivolous Philine, good, merry Laertes, or clever, appreciative Frau Melina, must have some purely human attraction for him, must allure him on with cajolery and flattery, and envelop him with an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. He is further tempted to stay when he again finds an opportunity to lend a helping hand in shaping the fate of the Melinas.

Melina is offered at a bargain a stock of scenery and costumes left behind by a bankrupt directress. With the aid of this apparatus he could form a troupe from the unoccupied actors whom chance has brought together, could arrange for performances, and procure a livelihood for himself and the others. The only thing lacking is for Wilhelm to advance the necessary money. Wilhelm, brought face to face with the possibility of being a benefactor to so many people, takes three hundred thalers of the money collected on his route and lends it to Melina.

Being now interested, not merely as a human being, but also as a business man, he watches the beginning of developments and accompanies the first steps of the new company with his advice and co-operation. He is now secretly a theatre director, stage manager, and dramaturgist, while he still remains the travelling agent of the firm of Werner and Meister.

The theatrical and literary charm, the financial interest, the tenderness of the actresses and the friendship of the actors seem to us to form a net strong enough to hold even wavering Wilhelm in its meshes. But the author now brings still stronger magnets to bear on him. He is drawn into close relationship with two strange figures, who exert a magic power upon him: Mignon, a young girl just entering her teens, and the Harpist, a venerable old man. Wilhelm has rescued Mignon from the hands of rope-dancers, whose manager cruelly mistreated her, and from the day of her rescue the slender black-haired Italian maiden has clung to him with truest love, but has hidden away her passion in the secret chambers of her heart. When he awakes from his easy-going dream life and tells her of his determination to return home, she writhes with agony and pours out her excruciating pain in torrents of tears. Wilhelm's tender heart melts at this outburst of grief and he swears to her that he will not forsake her, that she shall be his child. "A faint gladness shone upon her face.—'My father? Thou wilt not forsake me? Wilt be my father? I am thy child?'—Softly the harp began to play outside the door; the old man brought his most affecting songs as an evening offering to the friend, who, holding his child closer and closer in his arms, was enjoying the purest and most indescribable happiness."

This scene, which Goethe has painted with loving care and with the utmost soul-thrilling power, was doubtless that of which he confessed to Frau von Stein that he had wept bitterly as he filled in the details. It is not shallow caprice in the author, as though he had desired to bring a touching scene to a melodramatic close, that he brings the

Harpist with soothing songs to Wilhelm's door; he has from the very outset endowed this man with a mysterious prescience, enabling him at the proper hour to arouse or to quiet Wilhelm's soul by word and tone. Even after the first song that he hears from him Wilhelm can scarcely refrain from falling into his arms; after the second he addresses him as a helpful, protecting spirit, who has come with a voice of blessing and inspiration. Then, in a moment of annoying unrest, stealing up to the Harpist's door, he hears the song, *Whoe'er his bread with tears ne'er ate*, and, feeling himself rid of all faint-heartedness, begs for another song. The singing is followed by a conversation. "To everything that Wilhelm said to him," the author informs us, "the Harpist, with the purest accordance, answered in allusions which aroused all the related emotions and opened a wide field for the imagination." He feels an indescribable desire to decipher the enigmatical old man, and it is his unavowed determination to leave neither the poor Harpist nor Mignon to the caprices of a cold world.

In Mignon and the Harpist Goethe has introduced into his novel those mysterious forces, beyond the reach of human knowledge and control, which play a significant part in our lives.[38] The one rises up out of ourselves, it lies in the invisible depths of our own souls; this force is personified in Mignon. The other lies outside us, in the influence of divinely favoured spirits, whose highest and most genuine representative is the poet; it appears as the Harpist. The Harpist himself is the composer of his songs; he is a minstrel in the original sense. These two characters were absolutely necessary in the novel. A spirit of such rich endowments and fine sensibilities as Wilhelm's dared not be subjected merely to the influence of visible, tangible, easily comprehensible elements, if his development was to be true.

In spite of the great interest which Wilhelm took in the theatrical undertaking and the persons engaged in it, it was not probable that he would remain permanently with the troupe in a small town. There the enterprise could

not hope to rise above a very low level. Hence the author introduces a new device to keep Wilhelm attached to the theatre. A neighbouring count, who desires to entertain in the best way a prince who is soon to visit him, engages Melina's company. This raises the company to a higher sphere, where Wilhelm himself can appear on the stage, and from which is opened for him the prospect of becoming acquainted with the higher class of aristocratic society. He has long had an extraordinary admiration for the aristocracy and hopes that contact with such people will be an education in itself. To complete the array of forces drawing him away from home and his former calling, when the Count comes to engage the troupe, he is accompanied by his beautiful and gracious wife, who immediately exerts an inexpressible charm over Wilhelm. Her appearance on the scene helps him conquer all remaining doubts. He goes with the others to the castle, but without any thought of giving up his former mode of life. We now feel certain, however, that the question of his change to the calling of an actor is already decided. His fate has sprung from his character, as an organic outgrowth, without his having had anything to do with it.

At the castle Wilhelm feels himself in his element. He can play, he can write poetry, he can probe the esthetic problems which engage his thoughts, in discussions with highly educated people, experienced in the ways of the world, such as the Baron and Major Jarno, a favourite of the Prince, and he can associate with many men prominent in state and army, and live in a general atmosphere of highest culture and refinement. He belongs to the aristocracy himself, by virtue of his mind. This is silently recognised by them, for they treat him uniformly as an equal and admit him to their circle, although he passes for a member of the troupe. The women here, as everywhere else, have a special preference for him. He conceives a fondness for most of those he meets, but they all show an affection for him. What Goethe once wrote to Frau von Stein (1781) about himself fits Wilhelm exactly: "I am

and remain, whether I will or no, the favourite of women." While the Baroness is besieging him with craving cordiality, he enkindles in the heart of the beautiful, but unhappily married, Countess the warmest love, which, in spite of all her self-control and resignation, reveals itself at the moment of parting.

Beside the actor's art, the aristocratic society, and the love of women, there are other means of education in store for Wilhelm at the castle. Through Jarno his attention is called to Shakespeare, who seems to lay bare to him not merely aristocratic society, but the whole world in its tremendous activity and its most secret motives. His associations with the many men of high position whom he meets in the castle make his own former life appear to him narrow, dull, and sleepy, and this impression is still further deepened when he gains an insight into the world of Shakespeare. He is filled with the desire to plunge into the flood of fate, in order the sooner to know the world by experience and to make his life tell in the world and on it. It becomes apparent that along with his calling as an actor he is actuated by far higher ambitions. His knowledge of Shakespeare inspires him with a new ideal as an actor, that of producing the powerful Shakespearian dramas on the stage. We feel in advance that he will never rest until he has reached this goal.

Wilhelm now has something new and something better to live for. The melancholy, depressed accountant of a commercial firm has become joyous and free, and is animated, or rather reanimated, by high ideals. The only remaining ground for apprehension is the fact that he seizes upon the new phase of life with too fantastic a spirit. He no longer stops to consider whether he shall follow the players any further; it is to him a matter of course that he must follow them, although he continues to labour under the delusion that he still can and will return to his former pursuits. He is also under a delusion as to the immediate future. In a pleasing bit of humour the author gives us a significant glimpse of the young man's new ideals; he makes him stop

suddenly to reflect on his dress and come to the conclusion to doff the everyday garb of the counting-house and don a new, fantastic costume, designed according to his own romantic ideas.

So long as the charm of the present situation lasts, in which he fancies himself the leader of a colony passing through beautiful landscapes in a beautiful season of the year, he follows the troupe with most agreeable sensations. But how will it be when the company again sets up its boards in unimportant towns and is forced to give before bad audiences plays that are insignificant, both in subject-matter and in theatrical art? Will he not then say that his going with the troupe was ridiculous nonsense? Such an experience would certainly prove a powerful incentive for one of his emotional temperament to go back to the career of a merchant.

In order not to allow matters to come at once to such a crisis, and to avoid putting too many hindrances in the way of further developments, the author separates Wilhelm from the troupe by means of a *salto mortale*, almost in the literal sense of the term. The players are attacked by brigands and robbed of all their possessions. Wilhelm, the only one, beside Laertes, who defends himself bravely, is severely wounded. While he is still lying helpless on the ground an aristocratic company approaches in carriages and on horseback. A beautiful lady, with soft, majestic, calm, sympathetic features, rides up to him—Wilhelm thinks her the most noble, most lovely creature he has ever seen,—inquires about his welfare, summons her physician, who bandages his wounds, and on parting covers him with a warm overcoat. "At this moment, when he tried to open his mouth and stammer out a few words of gratitude, the lively impression of her presence had such a strange effect upon his already exhausted senses, that all at once it seemed to him as though her head were encircled with rays, and a brilliant light seemed by degrees to spread itself over her entire figure. . . . The saint vanished before the eyes of the swooning patient; he lost all consciousness."

Wilhelm is taken to the parson in the village and in a few weeks is fully recovered. His first thought is not, as we might expect after the loss of so much time, to turn to some serious occupation, whether as an actor or as a merchant, but to see the beautiful, compassionate Amazon. The idealistic, visionary side of his nature again gains the mastery over him, and all the serious resolutions resulting from his sojourn in the castle and his acquaintance with Shakespeare begin to take flight. Only after all his efforts—including a special journey of inquiry by the Harpist—to find out the name and residence of the noble family have proved vain, does he again take up a serious purpose.

He has apparently given up his theatrical career. He intends, it is true, to go with Mignon and the Harpist, who have remained with him, to a friend of his, Theatre-Director Serlo, who conducts a permanent theatre in a large city, but it is only for the purpose of using his personal influence to find employment for the members of the unfortunate company, as he plans to spend the rest of his time there in looking after his regular business. Hardly has he arrived at his destination when he entertains Serlo with glowing pictures of Shakespearian performances which would certainly be epoch-making in Germany. His passion for the theatre breaks out with all its former force, and the atmosphere of one of the leading German stages must decide whether or not Wilhelm shall change definitely to the profession of an actor. If it had depended wholly upon him, the decision would have been postponed for a long time. Owing to his passive, contemplative nature, and the vagueness of his ambition, he usually allows himself to be driven to a determination by outside influences, unless extraordinary circumstances arise.

Serlo urges him to come to a decision. He had soon learned to appreciate Wilhelm's histrionic talents; now he recognises also his fitness to become a dramaturgist and a stage-manager, and makes him the proposal that he enter the company as a performer and stage-manager. Wilhelm still hesitates, although the dream of his youth now seems

near fulfilment, and his strongest passion is promised most complete satisfaction. The moment he is about to give up the merchant's estate, family, and home, they appear to him in a charming light which he had never suspected. Nevertheless there is no doubt as to his final decision, and the author merely seeks some new way to hasten it. The end is brought about by the death of Wilhelm's father, the marriage of his sister to Werner, Werner's purpose to sell his father-in-law's house, and his proposal that Wilhelm use the money derived from the sale for speculation in real estate, and acquire, as he himself has done, the comforts based on a well-filled purse, which he as a true Philistine describes in most glowing colours. It is a delightful bit of psychological discrimination that the ideal picture which Werner paints of the worldly happiness of a merchant influences Wilhelm's decision far more than the breaking up of his home, or the liberation from parental authority, or the possession of his own property. This picture of the future destroys immediately the weak glory with which he was in the very act of encircling business life, and drives him to bind himself to the theatre in the greatest haste, as though he were in fear of a ghost. He makes just two conditions, which are very characteristic: that all the members of Melina's troupe be engaged, and that *Hamlet* be performed according to his plans. Serlo had already agreed to the first condition, and he now agrees to the second. The performance of *Hamlet* takes place and is completely successful. Wilhelm himself wins most enthusiastic applause in the rôle of the Prince of Denmark, whom he resembles so much, and for whom it is also so hard to reach a decision.

According to the original plan of the novel this success was doubtless to win Wilhelm permanently for the theatre and mark the beginning of the end. He might further have risen from stage-manager to director, and by his performances might have led us to believe that he was really inaugurating a new epoch in the history of the German theatre.[39] He had fulfilled his theatrical mission.

According to the plan of the revised novel it was necessary that Wilhelm should be turned away from the theatre. A motive was not hard to find. The working together of stage-manager, director, and colleagues was at first harmonious and for the best interests of all, owing to the general enthusiasm over the success achieved, and to the fact that the former members of Melina's company were happy in their new, assured positions, and were grateful to Wilhelm. Nevertheless it was not long before opposition, laziness, and jealousy began to show themselves and to interfere with Wilhelm's work and with his happiness. Furthermore the mechanical drudgery always connected with the practice of an art began to weigh more and more heavily upon him, and very soon the art of acting seemed to him nothing but a trade which offered less in return than any other trade for the expenditure of time and strength. He had now reached the point of view which Melina had once entertained and over which he himself had been so vexed. His aim in life, which had been hitherto a bright star lighting his path, was now found to be an ugly phantom. What next?

Wilhelm does not yet desert the theatre, it is true, but he has inwardly severed his connection with it; and now that he has grown tired of it we expect the return of his longing for poetry, of which he used to be so fond. All doubts as to his literary talent—they had never been very serious doubts—had long ago vanished from his breast, after both old and new products of his pen had won the applause of people of taste in the castle. To our astonishment, however, he does not yet consider changing to the occupation of a writer. Nor does he show any inclination toward any other definite career, whether scientific, artistic, or practical. All that there is left in him is an indefinite striving after a general harmonious rounding out of his personality, without his being in the least clear in his own mind as to the means to be employed to this end. He is on the point of falling into a habit of idle, belletristic, esthetic contemplation leading to pessimistic hatred of the world. The

danger is so much greater, as he is no longer obliged to work to gain a livelihood.

If the rich fund of culture that has been gathered together in this young man is to be made productive he must be trained for a regular, fixed, consistent, and preferably practical occupation; his manner of life must take some decided turn. To this end Wilhelm is sent away from the city and the tiresome theatre for a few weeks. The occasion for his departure is the fulfilment of a duty which he has promised to undertake for a friend. Serlo's sister Aurelie had had a *liaison* with a nobleman a few years before. The nobleman forsook her, and grief has ever since gnawed at her heart. On her deathbed she begs Wilhelm, who has meanwhile become her friend and confidant, to deliver a letter to her faithless lover. Wilhelm engages to do it and rides away on his commission.

Immediately after Aurelie's death, and hence before his departure, Wilhelm read a manuscript containing *The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul.* Once before his life had been strongly influenced by what he read,—in the case of Shakespeare. The reading of Shakespeare was destined to bring before his mind an actor's ideal, the performance of Shakespeare, and a life-ideal, vigorous action. The actor's ideal had been realised, without having produced the great results which Wilhelm had promised himself. The life-ideal had been lost sight of under the combined influences of natural traits and experiences. What significance is to be attached to the reading of the *Confessions?* It cannot have been small in the author's mind, for he inserted the entire text of the manuscript in his novel. What do the *Confessions* tell us?

The Beautiful Soul is the daughter of a highly educated man of noble birth. A hemorrhage, from which she suffered at the age of eight, confined her to her bed for nine months, and the long illness developed her emotional nature and her imagination to an unusual degree. She turned her eyes to God and began to build up an intimate intercourse with her "invisible Friend." At the age of twelve she fell

in love with the son of the marshal of the Court. This love, like her illness, turned her mind back to herself and brought her still nearer God. In the happy feeling of her love and its close connection with the Highest Being, she grew taciturn and avoided all unrestrained pleasure. The boy she loved fell ill and died, in spite of the prayers she sent up to God.

Phyllis, as the Beautiful Soul is called, grows to maturity, regains her health, and, through the influence of nature and the demands of society, learns to love life. The marriage of the Crown Prince and his ascent to the throne occasion many festivities and draw even Phyllis into a whirl of distractions, in the midst of which her tender feelings toward the invisible Friend are almost forgotten. She makes the acquaintance of an excellent young man by the name of Narciss, and they soon find pleasure in each other's company. The love which soon makes itself felt in their hearts is openly confessed on the occasion of a bloody encounter between Narciss and a captain. When Narciss is restored to health he seeks the hand of Phyllis and his suit is accepted. Love, betrothal, and serious intervening events, such as the duel, and her betrothed's failure to secure a position, have made God again a living factor in her life. He again becomes the confidant of her hopes and fears, of her sorrows and joys, and she acquires in this way an ever increasing serenity and peacefulness of soul. But there also come moments when she finds no consolation in God, and when she seeks to discover the cause, she finds that such is the case when her soul is not turned toward God in the most direct way. As the deviation is evidently due to foolish dissipations and employment with unworthy things, she decides to renounce all distractions, such as dancing, card-playing, and the like. Her betrothed and her own family seek in vain to make her change her mind. She clings to her purpose and prefers to give up her betrothed, rather than her peace of soul.

She lives on in this happy state for about ten years, and neither a second dangerous hemorrhage, with its resulting

physical weakness, nor the severe sufferings of her parents, to which her mother after a long struggle finally succumbs, are able to disturb the serenity of her God-filled soul. Her pious friends, however, who adhere to the strict Halle pietism, are unwilling to admit that her soul's salvation is completely assured. According to their tenets the way to salvation must first be prepared by a deep horror of sin; whereupon one must have a foretaste of hell in contrition, and then work one's way up gradually through faith to grace. Now Phyllis, in spite of her anxious self-examinations, is unable to discover any sin in her heart, so that she does not experience that horror which is prerequisite to the purification of the soul. In the course of time she makes the acquaintance of Philo, a man of strong religious character and high position, the possessor of wide knowledge and many talents, who gives her glimpses of the workings of the world and of his own inner life. At the same time she discovers, to her indescribable sorrow, that this distinguished, pious man has not always kept himself free from sinful thoughts and acts. "Am I better than he?" she asks herself in her fright. "Is it due only to chance and to a kind hand that I have been preserved from sin, whereas it is in my nature to commit any sin and any crime?" She is compelled to admit that such is unfortunately the case. Horror is followed by contrition, and she seeks anxiously after faith in redemption through Christ. In the midst of her agonising prayer for faith she feels herself coming into the immediate presence of Him who became man and died upon the cross, and this feeling is followed by an unwonted uplifting of her soul. At this moment not only does her former serenity return, it rises to an even higher and surer plane. As she finds her feelings best satisfied by the beliefs of the Moravians she joins this sect, takes part in their devotions, and strengthens her faith by means of their verses, litanies, and pictures, which she multiplies by means of her own art.

Let us make a halt at this point. We may well do so, as what follows in the *Confessions*, a sojourn at the castle

of Phyllis's uncle, represents a further development which is quite unimportant in her life as a whole. She retains her peace of soul and we foresee that she will die happy in this peace.

What is told up to the visit at the castle is the life history of Goethe's deceased friend Susanna von Klettenberg. Narciss is Herr von Olenschlager, later Baron von Olenschlager, who was several times burgomaster of Frankfort. Philo is Karl Friedrich von Moser, later minister of Hesse-Darmstadt, who lived in Frankfort as an ambassador from 1751 to 1766. Goethe planned the *Confessions*, as we know from his own words, on the basis of letters, early recorded conversations, and observations, and in this way created a work which is marvellous both from a stylistic and from a psychological point of view.[40] By his magic touch he has reproduced the impression which Fräulein von Klettenberg must have made on those who came in contact with her in the different periods of her life. What follows after the Beautiful Soul joins the Moravians is, with the exception of a few lines, the independent invention of the author.

As this invented addition was not essential in the portrayal of the spiritual development of the Beautiful Soul, it must owe its existence to the function assigned to it in the organism of the novel. But were the biographical details, which fill so many pages of the *Confessions*, to have no connection with the plot of the work? Were they to be merely a convenient pillar on which the author could support the addition, but which he transformed, out of love for Fräulein von Klettenberg and in her honour, into a monumental column? Such a thing would be conceivable in the *Wanderjahre*, but in the case of the *Lehrjahre* Goethe was still too conscious of his skill as an artist to mar the even regularity of the structure by the insertion of such a long narrative wholly foreign to the main story.

Wilhelm had borrowed the manuscript of the *Confessions* from a physician, and used it for the purpose of producing harmonious equilibrium and soothing peace in

the breast of Aurelie. He himself was also in need of such help. He looked back upon a painful, disappointing, uneventful past. He had been a merchant and had found no joy in such a calling; he had become an actor, because this occupation promised him the most beautiful satisfaction in life, but instead of sweet wine he had quaffed bitter wormwood from this cup; his first ardent love experience had ended in a hideous mockery; his act of embracing the Countess, to which he was involuntarily led by her affection as well as by his own, had, as he now hears for the first time, caused the noble lady, through consciousness of guilt and strange imaginations, to fall into a melancholy; by Melina, whom he had helped to obtain a wife and for whom he had on two different occasions secured positions, he had been treated with the basest ingratitude; the Harpist, his revered soul-inspirer and alleviator, had gone mad. His friend Serlo had begun to turn away from him out of petty, egotistical motives; his friend Aurelie had been harshly handled by her brother, and betrayed by her lover; her death, which liberated her from a crushing earthly burden, robbed him of a friend, and laid upon him a sad commission. Beyond this commission he saw no definite course to pursue and very perplexing problems awaiting his solution. He had to provide for Aurelie's son Felix and for Mignon, and did not know what was to become of himself. Behind him and before him there seemed to lie an "endless void."

For the uplifting of a soul like his from such a prostrate condition nothing could be more powerful than religion. Throughout his previous life he had held himself aloof from this character-building force; but Goethe could not think of entirely excluding such a factor from the course of his development. Since religion exerts a mightier influence when it appears to us as an example than when it is brought before us as a system of teachings he had Wilhelm pass through a noble, pious existence through the medium of his reading, intending that his hero should come in contact with the same heavenly atmosphere from which he himself

had derived such benefit in days and years of distress, and which had so thoroughly filled his heart with patience, peace, hope, and trust.

Wilhelm's wounded spirit had first to be healed before he could pass to the new and higher activity which the author planned for him. But the more surely the one object was attained by the reading of the *Confessions*, the more it was to be feared that the other might be hindered by it. The moment that Wilhelm felt the healing balm of life in God, or, let us say, in this pure ideal, there arose within him a great temptation to devote himself to the same idealistic method of self-culture and self-purification as that followed by the Beautiful Soul, namely, passive self-examination. It was quite natural for him to become absorbed in mere introspection, especially as all the accompanying circumstances were highly favourable to such a mode of life, since he had come into possession of a fortune and had taken a dislike to the theatre. In order to anticipate this danger, and to avoid annulling the helpful influence of the *Confessions* by a harmful effect, a critical appendix had to be added. Goethe inserted it so skilfully and with so little obtrusion of his real purpose that very few of his readers perceive its importance.

The uncle of the Beautiful Soul, a worthy man of means and artistic temperament, prepares a wedding feast for her sister, which occasions Phyllis's first visit to his castle and her first acquaintance with the value of art. She hears good music artistically performed, and feels how this music appeals to the deeper and better nature of man. She looks through an historically arranged picture gallery and sees in it, as it were, a symbol of moral culture. She confesses to her uncle how happy she is made by these impressions, and he makes use of the opportunity to show her that it is not well to give one's self up to moral culture in solitude and isolation; it will be found, rather, that one whose spirit strives after moral culture has every reason to cultivate at the same time his finer sensuous nature, so as not to be in danger of falling from his moral height by

yielding to the allurements of an unschooled imagination, and of lowering his nobler nature by insipid dawdling, if nothing worse.

He explains to her further that if man creates such beautiful and such ennobling things he cannot be as sinful, as corrupt, as pious souls are wont to think. Indeed, the very belief that God once took on the form of man must lead us to infer that there cannot be in man anything inconsistent with the Divine Being. Otherwise how could the Creator have been so intimately united with man? And even if we do often feel an unlikeness to the Deity, still it is wiser to seek for the signs of our godlikeness rather than continually to spy out the faults and weaknesses of our nature.

This is all spoken as a direct criticism of the Beautiful Soul, and she feels it as such. Wilhelm allows these considerations to pass unnoticed, as they have no direct application to him. The uncle makes other observations, however, which may have come closer home to him. Let us select a few of his apothegms: "Man deserves greatest credit when he controls conditions as much as possible, and allows himself to be controlled by them as little as possible. . . . I honour the man who knows exactly what he wants, advances constantly, knows what means will serve his end, and knows how to lay hold on them and use them. . . . The largest part of any misfortune and what we call evil arises from the fact that men are too remiss in gaining a thorough knowledge of their aims, and in working earnestly toward them, when they have acquired such knowledge. . . . Determination and perseverance are in my opinion the things most deserving of honour and respect in man. . . . When I make the acquaintance of a man I ask at once the questions: 'With what does he occupy himself? and how? and in what order?' and the answer to these questions determines my interest in him."

What feelings must have passed through Wilhelm's mind as he read these sentences! Their deep justification he could not deny. How did he stand with respect to

them? He had always allowed himself to be controlled by circumstances. His aims and the means of attaining them had rarely been clear in his mind. When they had been clear to him he had pursued what he had undertaken without determination or perseverance. He had allowed himself to be tossed back and forth like a shuttlecock, and with weak compliance had permitted himself to be crowded out of his path, either by some flattering delusion or by some unpleasant circumstance. If he had been called upon to answer the uncle's last question be would have been obliged to lower his eyes in shame. Even when he compared himself with the weak, sickly woman to whom the uncle was speaking, the result of the comparison was necessarily unfavourable to him. She had always known what she wanted and had pursued her purposes with firm tenacity, and, what is more, with self-sacrifice. And yet he was obliged to admit, on the other hand, that, admirable as was her conduct, and enviable as was the happiness of soul which she had acquired, she had done nothing that would outlive her. She had been able to accomplish much for herself, but nothing for others. The moment she died her existence was lost sight of, like that of a taper that has burned up. All her doings had been ordered solely by the noblest and most refined egoism. Why so? Because she developed no real activity, created nothing objective, having turned her whole attention to self-culture; because she led a life of introspection, instead of a life of action.

In her case this self-centred life was excusable; she was a woman, ill and weak. But he was a man, strong and well. Would not his life pass away without leaving a trace behind, just as the life of the Beautiful Soul had done, if he continued to live as heretofore? It was indeed a fine ideal to acquire a well-balanced education of all his physical and mental powers, and above all else the highest development of his moral nature, and he was certainly justified in writing to Werner, who urged him to engage in some practical activity: "What good will it do me to manufacture good iron, when my own inner being is full

of dross? and what to set a landed estate in order, when I am not at one with myself?" "But," one might ask in reply, "what will the gold which you obtain avail you, if you make no use of it?" Was it not possible to combine the one with the other? Was not the end more certain of attainment through the combination of acquisition and use, than through the devotion of so much time to acquisition alone, which might perhaps become so absorbing that practical use would be lost sight of? Was not also the lack of inward harmony more readily to be supplied by combining the two things? Was not the creator of Wilhelm of this opinion? "How can one learn to know one's self? By action, but never by introspection. Seek to do thy duty, and thou shalt straightway know what is in thee."

Furthermore, does not the road of constant self-examination lead to yawning abysses? Does not one who follows it come to the most dangerous self-deceptions and to an etherealisation of one's existence, in which one seems to one's self to be only a bodiless spirit, having no longer any connection with the world? Was not then the physician, the shrewd friend of the uncle, right, when he warned the Beautiful Soul against it, because it undermines the foundations of existence, and when he added with emphasis: "To lead an active life is man's first mission"? Who could have blamed the uncle and the abbé for keeping the Beautiful Soul's nephews and nieces, whose education was intrusted to them, from associating with their aunt, in spite of the great admiration which they had for her? Did not Wilhelm also have to admit that if he himself had children they would have to be kept away from him? What could they be expected to learn from him, the dreamer, who wandered about aimlessly, wavering now in this direction, now in that, and so excessively occupied with himself? Was it perhaps not time to be sending Mignon away from him? Had he not, as he himself confesses, neglected her education most cruelly?

Thus the *Confessions* are from every point of view

calculated to affect Wilhelm. They are intended first to give him repose and hope, and then to arouse him to a right understanding of himself and the world, to self-limitation and to energetic action. They furnish the motives for the ending of the novel, and Goethe had good grounds for saying of them: "The book of confessions points forwards and backwards, and while it limits, it at the same time leads and guides."

Goethe represents the impression on Wilhelm in a beautiful symbolism. Spring has burst forth in full splendour, a storm is approaching, and a magnificent rainbow adds its glory to the landscape. The *Confessions* have affected Wilhelm as Iphigenia's presence did Orestes. There we also find the pictures of a storm and a rainbow. "The earth refreshing odour now exhales, inviting me henceforth to strive to gain true joy in life, and mighty deeds perform." Wilhelm's words are more subdued and more indefinite: "We are stirred by the story of every good deed, we are moved by the sight of every harmonious object; they make us feel that we are not altogether strangers: we fancy ourselves nearer a home toward which our best inner nature impatiently strives." It is the home of people of ideals engaged in active life, and Wilhelm comes in close touch with them. Through these people the *Confessions*, which we have hitherto known only as a didactic picture and a magnetic needle for the further guidance of the story, become an essential part of the action, into which they introduce several characters.

This was no longer possible in the case of the Beautiful Soul, as she was already dead. She was survived, however, by four children of a deceased sister, two boys, Lothario and Friedrich, and two girls, Natalie and a younger sister whose name is not mentioned. Friedrich and his younger sister we have met before. Friedrich, a wild, fiery, but good-hearted youth had gone out into the world and had travelled about for a time with Melina's company; the sister had become the wife of the Count, whose castle had for a time sheltered the players. We have yet to be introduced to

Lothario and Natalie, who have, however, more than once had something to do with the plot. We have already met the physician in Aurelie's room and at the home of the clergyman who had the Harpist in charge; the abbé is the stranger with whom Wilhelm had the conversation in the hotel in the first book, and who crossed his path a few times later in life. These outward circumstances were another reason why Goethe said of the *Confessions* that they point forwards and backwards.

While reading this book of confessions Wilhelm never suspects how close he has stood to the family of the Beautisul Soul, nor how much closer he is yet to come to them. A nature as noble and profound as his—and herein lies the hidden meaning of these new associations—can experience the most refining and most determining influences, and find the highest happiness, only in a circle of people who by their own efforts have risen to such a high degree of inward perfection as did the "beautiful souls" of the eighteenth century.

His conversion from an inactive life devoted to self-culture, from roaming and wavering, now in this direction, now in that, to a well defined, carefully planned, high-minded activity, from a fitful search after contentment in the hazy distance to a contented existence in the sphere allotted him by fate, from self-centred planning and meditating to an activity embracing both himself and others—this conversion, for which the reading of the *Confessions* had prepared the way, is completed by contact with the living models.

Wilhelm is first taken to Lothario's estate. Lothario is the lover who forsook Aurelie. Wilhelm has prepared in his mind a fine rebuke, but, at the sight of Lothario and what he is accomplishing, feels himself completely disarmed. He is brought face to face with a personality of noble, natural gifts, splendidly developed by experience and self-culture. Love-passion, coming over him from time to time, may well have led him into error, but never into guilt. He forsook Aurelie because his love for the eccentric actress

had died, and he could not pretend a feeling which was no longer alive. Beyond this he has nothing with which to reproach himself. Felix is not his son, nor Aurelie's; he is only her adopted child.

Lothario is so well suited to serve as a model for Wilhelm because he has passed through a development similar to Wilhelm's. He once had a longing to journey far away and thought he could not be a useful man at home. An act that was not accompanied by a thousand dangers did not seem to him worthy or important. So he went to America and returned, then said of his own house and his own orchard, "Here or nowhere is America." He sought and found the extraordinary in the daily fulfilment of duty in a limited field of work. He managed his estate most excellently and might have been satisfied.

But his real satisfaction is not based upon his own personal welfare. His servants, his peasants, are to have a share in the gain which comes to him. "One does not always lose what one gives away. Do I not make far better use of my estates than my father did? Am I not in a fair way to raise my income still higher? Shall I enjoy this growing advantage alone? Shall I not grant him who works with me and for me some of the advantages in his sphere which accrue to us with the growth of knowledge and the progress of the times? These magnanimous, far-seeing words, which look forward to the social and political reform movements of the succeeding centuries, he puts into practice before Wilhelm's eyes, by appearing before the judge and signing away certain rights and privileges in favour of his employees. Wilhelm witnesses this act with silent amazement. In this practical work there is no narrow-minded Philistinism as in the case of Werner's. Here is a great, productive mind, interested in the common welfare in a way to elicit the warmest sympathy of an idealist.

Wilhelm is to be taught the lesson still more thoroughly and to experience a far deeper sense of shame. Lothario is an active man. Wilhelm is to be made to realise also

how far he is inferior to an active woman. He goes to the home of Therese. She is exactly the opposite of the Beautiful Soul. As the latter is all contemplation, she is all active energy. She is still young and all alone in the world. A small freehold and a small house, glistening with neatness and cleanliness, is her possession. The management of her model estate and the careful conduct of her neat household are not enough to utilise all her energy. She has taken children to educate and, along with her other duties, is overseeing the management of a large neighbouring estate, the owner of which is ill.

Misalliances are spoken of. She says she knows of but one kind for herself, one in which she would have no work to do and would be forced to do the honours at social entertainments. In spite of the most painful experiences in life she has preserved a healthy, cheerful disposition by fruitful labour. Of the reading of books she holds no very high opinion; she reads the book of the world. We see Werther's Lotte vividly portrayed before our eyes. One of her painful experiences was that Lothario, to whom she had been betrothed, was separated from her by an insurmountable hindrance. Still, she never thinks of burying herself in sorrowful memories of the past; her eyes look forward and her steps ever advance.

Wilhelm is charmed with her personality. How her clearness of mind contrasts with his confusion, her assurance with his doubting, her successful accomplishments with his dissipation of his strength! He is coming nearer and nearer to the determination to enter upon a wholly new career in life. A second sojourn in Lothario's castle puts the seal upon his resolution, and he returns to the city to take formal leave of the theatre and to care for Mignon and Felix.

Upon his return to the city he discovers that Aurelie's old servant is Barbara. The author's motivation of this late recognition is very forced. Barbara discloses to him that Felix is not Aurelie's child, but Mariane's, and that Wilhelm himself is the child's father. She tells him also

that Mariane remained true to him till her death. On that unfortunate night which had cast Wilhelm into despair, the other lover had, to be sure, been in Mariane's room, but she had driven him from the room by force and then locked her door. He had then sat for hours with Barbara, at that time Mariane's servant. From that time on Mariane had never renewed her association with Norberg. As a proof Barbara lays before Wilhelm letters and diary leaves which give eloquent testimony of Mariane's purity and of her passionate, painful love for Wilhelm.

Wilhelm is most deeply agitated, and yet rejoiced to possess in Felix, to whom he has long been drawn by a secret affection, a son. There is now nothing further to detain him from entering upon a new life. Until he has secured for himself a permanent occupation in practical affairs the education of the children is to be intrusted to the best possible hands, and Therese is chosen to be a mother to them. Wilhelm again returns to Lothario's castle, wishing to be connected with him and his associates, in order that through them he may be guided to a "sure and settled occupation."

The reformation which has taken place in Wilhelm is to be brought home to him by an outward sign. This fanciful idea of the author is a strange one, but it finds its explanation in the fondness of the times for secret humanitarian organisations and their formularies and degrees.

We learn that Lothario and his friends represent such a secret organisation, which has as its purpose the guidance of good, but erring men. The members have early recognised Wilhelm as such a young man, and this accounts for the fact that Jarno and, above all, the abbé have come in his way under various disguises, and have given him warnings. This playing Providence is a motive in the choice of which the author has shown little felicity. As it proved unsuccessful we do not understand its purpose; if it had been successful Wilhelm would have appeared a puppet manipulated on a wire.

Wilhelm has now reached a turning-point where his apprenticeship can be declared at an end. He is taken into a tower and there with theatrical formalities is given a certificate showing that he has served his full time as an apprentice. He is given permission to ask a question. Having observed that the league has discovered many secrets, he asks whether Felix is really his son. "Hail to you for this question!" exclaims the abbé, "Felix is your son. . . . Hail to thee, young man! Thy years of apprenticeship are over; nature hath released thee from thine indentures."

"Nature hath released thee from thine indentures." By nature, by his fatherly feelings, Wilhelm has been moved to ask about others before he asked about himself. He has plainly entered upon the life for others, and thus nature has released him from his indentures.

Wilhelm's plan to purchase property and remain in the neighbourhood of his so highly esteemed friends is supported by chance. In the vicinity there are some estates for sale which Lothario is desirous of purchasing in common with a commercial firm from abroad. Suddenly Werner appears at the castle as the representative of the firm, the purchase is made, and the division of the estates between Wilhelm and Lothario is quickly accomplished. The author makes use of the presence of Werner to draw a contrast between the outward appearances of the two friends, who have not seen each other for years. It is charmingly introduced. The friends are mutually astonished at their changed looks. Werner has grown more spare, his face less full, his nose longer, the whole top of his head bald, his voice loud, coarse, and harsh, his chest sunken, his shoulders stooped, his cheeks colourless. He is the perfect image of a narrow-minded money-maker. On the other hand, Wilhelm's eyes have grown deeper, his forehead broader, his nose finer, his mouth more amiable, and his head is covered with a thick growth of hair. It is plain that the author is wholly on the side of the idealist. He indicates to us that this high-aspiring man, in spite of his

visions, his groping in the dark, and his many mistakes, has nevertheless made constant progress in his inward development.[41] One small circumstance shows us that this idealist is no longer the same dreamy phantast, but has passed through a wholesome and necessary transition to a life of carefully planned, well defined activity; that is to say, he has adapted himself to conditions in the normal, civic world. He has discarded the fantastic costume, which he had put on after his departure from the castle, for the proper dress of his class. The only symbol left of his unlimited idealism is his long, loosely flowing hair. Werner takes occasion to impress upon him the advisability of having this tied up in a braid in order to make himself look like a human being.

Wilhelm walks out over his newly purchased estates, leading by the hand his son Felix, who was sent for by the friends and came rushing in at the conclusion of the ceremony releasing Wilhelm from his apprenticeship. "He no longer looked upon the world with the eye of a bird of passage. All the improvements he planned to make were to be for the future benefit of the boy, and everything that he did was to endure for several generations." He himself was to be still more firmly rooted to the soil, and more firmly bound to a settled life, by marriage. The thought of Mignon and Felix naturally suggested to him such a step. "There is no longer time for me to waste my years and the years of others; I must collect myself and consider what I have to do for myself and for the good creatures whom nature and inclination have bound so closely to me." He does not need to seek long. After his first visit at the home of Therese he had felt plainly what bliss it must be to live by the side of this thoroughly enlightened, thoroughly active woman. He makes up his mind quickly and offers Therese his hand.

The author might have closed the novel with her consent. The problems that had been raised were solved. Like Faust, after he has fought his way through to enlightenment, we might have seen Wilhelm in the future engaged

in restless activity on his newly acquired possessions, forcing the soil to yield greater returns, working for the welfare of his family, his servants, his community, his country, and devoting his accumulated powers to the good of the world. If Therese lacked anything necessary to make Wilhelm's happiness permanent, the author was at liberty to give her some of the qualities of Natalie. But this was not his will. He desired to have her appear as a complete contrast to the Beautiful Soul, and incidentally to Wilhelm, so that Natalie might represent the golden mean, the crowning personality of the novel. With such a shaping of the plot he might have allowed Wilhelm once more to fall into error, which was altogether probable, because of his too strong reaction against his own former self.

As the fate of the Harpist and Mignon was still to be solved, and some secondary purposes still occupied the author's mind, he added an eighth book, or, to be more accurate, the eighth book with the exception of the first chapter. He took up the problems before him in such a leisurely manner, spinning out every episode and many details at such great length, that this book, although it carries the action very little farther, turned out almost double the length of the first books. The author no longer held the threads firmly in his hand; he repeated himself, made awkward insertions, lost himself in contradictions, surprising us with events for which we have not been prepared, and resorting to artifices to which we are not accustomed in the finished products of his fine pen.

Even the manner in which he brings Wilhelm and Natalie together has something forced and contradictory about it. Mignon, whom Wilhelm has sent to Therese, appears all at once in the home of Natalie, who calls upon Lothario to send for Wilhelm, because Mignon seems to be pining away. Wilhelm responds immediately, not yet knowing that in Natalie he will find his Amazon, and in her castle the castle of the uncle of the *Confessions*. The author has thrown a flood of light on Natalie long before she appears, and has referred to her again and again, that we might not

forget her. From the mouth of her noble aunt, the Beautiful Soul, we have heard the most lavish praise of her as a child. Her virtues have been lauded in a similar way by two such prominent and superior persons as Therese and Lothario. Therese, without realising the full significance of her words, says: "When you make the acquaintance of my noble friend, you will begin a new life: her beauty and her goodness make her worthy of the adoration of a whole world." Lothario says that his sister deserves to be called a "beautiful soul" more than her highly esteemed aunt does. The halo which Wilhelm at once sees encircling her head is more than a mere product of his excitable imagination. Goethe purposely gave her such an elevated character. According to his own confession, he wished to represent in her Christianity "in its purest sense," after it had appeared to us clouded and one-sided in the Beautiful Soul. Natalie has communion with God, purity of heart, peace of soul, without any visionary conversations, without any "system," without any anxious delving into her inner self, without contrition and ecstasy, and without devotional exercises—simply through her favoured nature. Her communion with God, far from being disturbed by the world, is strengthened by communion with the world; her love for God is outwardly manifested in love for the world. She shows the full harmony of moral and spiritual education and useful activity, of tender feeling and clear understanding, of an esthetical and a practical grasp of things, of rising to the sublime and the universal and clinging to the commonplace, the temporal, the specific. In the midst of the demands of the day she does not forget the demands of eternity, nor in the midst of the latter the former. She overcomes the one-sidedness both of the Beautiful Soul and of Therese. She is a perfect personality. It is not possible for the author fully to develop her character before us, and so we do not gain as vivid a picture of her as we do, say, of Iphigenia, whom she most closely resembles. What we see is a clever, reposeful, tender-hearted woman, engaged in a most worthy occupation. As to her further

qualities and her higher virtues we must take the author at his word.

There is no doubt in our minds that Wilhelm will fall passionately in love with Natalie at first sight, and will consider his love for Therese an error. This he does. At the same time matters take an entirely new turn. The hindrance which has separated Lothario from Therese has been removed, and Lothario, not knowing that Therese is betrothed to Wilhelm, renews his suit for her hand. Furthermore, Natalie feels that she is involuntarily drawn to Wilhelm. All concerned are so noble-minded that no one of them wishes to rob the other of anything. Natalie does not even betray by a single gesture what takes place in her heart. A peculiar situation develops, which the author spins out to a great length. He gradually brings all persons concerned to Natalie's castle. When Therese comes and throws her arms around Wilhelm as her betrothed and kisses him most fervently, Mignon falls in a heap on the floor, struck by apoplexy. Her heart, which had already suffered so long, was unable to bear the sight. Preparations are made to bury her with very romantic formalities.

As romanticism had made its entrance into Lothario's castle with the tower hall, it was introduced into Natalie's castle with the "hall of the past." Her uncle had fitted out this hall with most exquisite taste and set it apart as a burial place. He himself was the first to be interred there. As an inscription above his tomb appear the words which express Goethe's joyous belief in the life this side of the grave: "Remember to live."

Among others in attendance at Mignon's funeral is an old friend of the uncle, Marchese. Cipriani, who happened to be passing through on a tour of Germany. By the image of Christ tattooed on Mignon's arm he recognises her as his niece whom he has long considered lost. Family conditions that fill us with terror and amazement are revealed, and we learn now the history and home, not only of Mignon, but also of the Harpist, who is the brother of the Marchese

and the father of Mignon. He, too, comes to the castle, healed, but he has not long to live. Thinking one day that his carelessness has been the means of poisoning Felix, he cuts his throat. Thus one catastrophe after another is heaped upon Wilhelm. Just at the moment when he fancies that he has happiness within his grasp, it vanishes in the misty distance.

He has felt so well in Natalie's home. Here for the first time he has seen art in all its splendour. The castle has made an entirely different impression upon him from that upon the Beautiful Soul. He feels that he is in the most sacred place he has ever known, and is lifted out of himself. A world, a heaven, open before his eyes. What feelings come over him as he looks at some of the works of art! He finds here the works before which as a boy he had often stood and meditated in his grandfather's house, and which he had watched with sorrow as they went away. The picture of the sick prince, pining away in love, looks down upon him again, and again he seems to resemble it. Again no other rescue but flight seems to offer itself to him.

Here the author makes use of his omnipotence. Friedrich, the mischievous little blond, comes to the castle just at the right time. He overhears Natalie talking to herself, finds out about her love for Wilhelm, and brings the two backward lovers together with his roguish pranks. All the painful experiences of the distant and the immediate past are herewith blotted out of Wilhelm's breast; he feels himself in possession of the "highest happiness."

Will he enjoy it?

The Marchese, moved by the fatherly protection which Wilhelm has extended to Mignon, invites him to his own and his brother's possessions on Lago Maggiore as a guest, that they may become better acquainted with him and give over to him Mignon's inheritance. Wilhelm, who has for years cherished a longing for the southland, enters upon the journey.

Is this ending satisfactory? Do we expect to find Wilhelm thus engaged at the end of the great novel? He

has tried our patience to the last extreme. His wavering hither and thither, his shrinking back from the annoyances of a calling for which he has an ardent longing, his letting things take their course, this everlasting inclining of heart to heart, has more and more turned away our sympathy, and hence also our interest, from him, in spite of all the fine qualities which we observe in him and which lead us to suppose that he has others.

At the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth book, after long roaming about and an unbounded aspiration for education, he has attained to the knowledge of the value of permanent, systematic, productive activity within a well-defined sphere. We draw a deep breath and return to him joyfully. He has become a land-owner and we hope soon to see him engaged in productive work.

We are sorely disappointed. Again he lies idle for many weeks in Natalie's castle, occupied with his own and others' affairs of the heart, an occupation to which he has for years devoted an excessive amount of his time. Still we have hopes that he will come out right at the end of the book. Here, at any rate, we hope that the prospect will again appear of which we had a glimpse in the beginning. But here again we experience a bitter disappointment, and this is the impression which is to remain with us. Instead of turning to his new calling of serious activity with some definite end in view, the end toward which his whole development has pointed, Wilhelm sets out to travel and, what makes the case still worse, takes Felix with him. We now give up all hope that this man will ever return to any kind of of permanent, fruitful work. All the good resolutions that he has announced in the past now appear as empty phrases with which he deceived himself. We are now convinced of what we were often inclined to surmise, that we indeed have to do with a weak, unmanly character. Thus the past is robbed of the foil to set it off, and the novel of its logical conclusion.

If we ask how Goethe came to bend back the golden point, which had shone out so full of promise, the answer

is not hard to give. During the writing of the last book the idea of a continuation—the *Wanderjahre*—occurred to him, and he thought he had to provide some hook to which to attach it. It was also necessary that Wilhelm and Felix be away on their travels. Goethe may have believed, further, that it was enough that the problem had been solved theoretically, and the new mode of life had been expressed in Wilhelm's views.[42]

In the majority of his contemporary readers Goethe was not deceived, as they took no offence at Wilhelm's continued passivity. This was due to the demands that were made of the higher type of novel in the second half of the century. As though by way of defence against the demands of his own more manly nature and a more manly age in the future, Goethe has himself embodied in a few words in *Wilhelm Meister* a theory of the novel, in which he sets forth the idea that it is the chief function of the novel to portray sentiments and occurrences, and of the drama to portray characters and deeds. Hence the hero of a novel must be passive, at least not influential to a high degree, whereas the hero of a drama is expected to be influential and to accomplish great deeds.

Goethe's theory as given in *Wilhelm Meister* is based less upon the English writers (Richardson, Goldsmith, Fielding) whom he there mentions than upon two famous German examples, his own *Werther* and Wieland's *Agathon*. It fits both these works exactly. But *Werther* is a homogeneous soul-picture, for the scope of which the conditions to be taken into consideration are entirely different from those for a long novel; and Wieland's long-drawn-out *Agathon*, with its endless belletristic conversations, would frighten away rather than attract modern imitators. The opinion of the eighteenth century, however, was different. Even Lessing was enthusiastic over *Agathon*, considering it the first and only novel for the thinking man of classic taste. Such opinions are very easy to explain by the effect of contrast. After one had for centuries been limited to the coarse diet of novels of adventure and intrigue, in which

there were many tangible occurrences, but no soul-developments, it was a feast indeed to read a novel which undertook nothing but to offer a "soul's history," which did not pretend to be anything but an "educational novel." Blanckenburg, a man of fine education, wrote in his *Versuch über den Roman* (1774): "I honour plain humanity, of which a clear head and a pure heart are the most important ingredients. Man must be shown to us so that we may first see this in him and then observe how he has come into possession of these qualities." In this one-sidedness people were altogether too forgetful of the psychological significance of a man's acts. The hero cultivated his "humanity," his soul, almost exclusively by beholding and receiving. Like a pebble he allowed himself to be filed and rounded by the waves of fate.

There were very few people who were so thoroughly convinced as was Goethe, not only of the ethical importance, but also of the educational value of action. Hence it was that he made the knowledge of this fact the goal toward which Wilhelm was to strive. But as he wished to show us how Wilhelm came into possession of this knowledge it was proper for him to exclude action up to that point, and thus to adapt the course of his hero's life to the theory and taste of his leading contemporaries. This explains the hero's passivity up to the first chapter of the eighth book, but no further. That beyond this point, after he has completely grasped the new principle of life, he still continues through the whole of a long book to devote his time exclusively to emotional matters, must be the result either of a conscious, or of an unconscious, tendency on the part of the author. By seeking to discover this tendency we shall be led to the most secret of all his reasons for creating this character.

Goethe once called Wilhelm his beloved double. Double? Was he not rather his opposite? Where in Wilhelm do we find Goethe's pleasure in action, his perseverance, energy, sense of duty, his enlightenment and knowledge of the world? Are not the uncle, in whom Schiller recognised

Goethe, and Lothario, in whose mouth the author placed his own strict maxim concerning the conscientious fulfilment of the task which falls to one by choice or fate, "Here or nowhere is what we seek," the images of himself? Certainly. And yet Wilhelm is also his image. The weak, yielding, contemplative, passive, somnambulistic, fantastic tendencies which we observe in Wilhelm, Goethe also possessed, and these seemed to him absolutely necessary ingredients of his hero. There was very great danger, however, that these ingredients might gain the upper hand, and that their agreeable power might overshadow the other factors. In his usual way the author, fully conscious of this danger, employed literary production to rid himself of his annoyances in life, and, at the same time, by means of the exaggerated picture of one phase of his individuality, to drive himself forcibly to the opposite phase. But excellent as this simple remedy was for neutralising his own weaknesses, or rather the weaknesses due to his great natural endowments, literary reflection in itself would not have sufficed, if the remedies of active life had not come to its aid.

Goethe himself found remedies for his passivity and somnambulism in practical activity, especially such as his offices and the natural sciences afforded him. Hence it was with mature judgment that, after having Wilhelm Meister give up the life of a merchant, he kept him free from practical activity and from the sciences, indeed, left him no interest at all in nature. On walking about through the uncle's castle, Wilhelm enters, among other rooms, a library, a museum of natural history, and a cabinet of physical apparatus. "He felt so strange in the presence of all these objects," we are told. When he takes a walk with Felix in the garden he is greatly embarrassed by the child's questions about the names and uses of the plants. He now notices "how little interest he has taken in the things outside himself."

If we seek then to understand Wilhelm's character by recalling the personal needs of the author, we shall arrive

at the best explanation of all his phases. His one-sidedness was a source of pleasure to the author, for which reason he kept it up to the very last moment. The agreeable sensation which Wilhelm's inaction afforded Goethe personally deceived him as to the unfavourable impression which it must make on others, if continued to the end, with no prospect of a change in the future. This deception was furthered by the taste of the times already described. And yet even in those days there were people, for example Wilhelm von Humboldt, who found fault with Wilhelm's weakly character.

Goethe called Wilhelm his beloved double. He had grounds for using the word "beloved," for Wilhelm exerted a liberating influence upon him. A more potent reason, however, was the fact that, with all his faults and mistakes, Wilhelm was after all a pure and infinitely good young man, whose confused and awkward striving to educate every side of his nature must have appealed to the author's sympathies, as it does to ours, if we look at him only from this side.* Viewed in this light he appears to us as a representative of that genuinely German type of profound, but diffident souls, who have found their classical expression in German literature in Parzival and Simplicissimus. The fact that Wilhelm worked his way up to enlightenment and action makes the novel a symbolical anticipation of the later development of the German people. It was possible for Goethe thus to anticipate the future because he represented in himself the genius of his nation.

The work as a whole met with widely diverging criticisms. In general the favourable opinions predominated, although Goethe had made many enemies by the publication of the *Xenien*. The most enthusiastic expressions came from the circle in Jena, from Schiller and the two Schlegels. Schiller's correspondence with Goethe had hitherto shown a certain reserve, due to their difference in age and rank, and to Goethe's stately bearing; but after he had read the

* Goethe later characterised him, in the slang of students, as a "poor dog."

whole finished work he was no longer able to contain his feelings, and addressed Goethe as his "beloved friend." He counted it a special favour of fortune that he had lived to see the completion of the work, and that it had fallen in the period of his own upward striving. "I cannot describe to you," he writes, "how deeply I have been affected by the truth, the beautiful life, the wealth of observation, and the simplicity contained in this work. The sensation is now more restless, to be sure, than it will be when I have completely mastered the work, which will mark an important crisis for my mind. Nevertheless it is a sensation of the beautiful, and of the beautiful alone, and the unrest is due solely to the fact that my understanding has not yet been able to catch up with my emotions. I now understand completely your remark that it is really the beautiful, the true, that moves you, often to tears. Calm and deep, clear and yet inscrutable as nature, such is the impression it makes and such it stands before me, and everything, even the smallest minor detail, shows the beautiful equanimity of soul from which the whole has sprung." To Körner he wrote the brief, drastic words, "In comparison with Goethe I am and remain a poetic vagabond" (June 27, 1796).

Friedrich Schlegel, in the *Athenäum*, which he published in conjunction with his brother, called it an "absolutely new and unique book," which must be judged by none but the highest standards. He said further that the feelings revolt at the thought of judging this divine work by the ordinary esthetic canons of the schools. Everything seemed to him thought out and expressed, as though by one who is at the same time a divine poet and a perfect artist. Even the smallest stroke in the subsidiary passages seemed to be there for its own sake and to enjoy its own independent existence. Novalis, who at first agreed with his friend, later declared himself against this view, saying that the work was thoroughly prosaic and modern. "The romantic element in it goes to ruin, as does also the poetry of nature, the supernatural. The book treats only of ordinary human

things, nature and mysticism are wholly forgotten. It is a poetised story of civil and domestic life; the supernatural is treated in it avowedly as poetry and visionariness."

What Novalis points out as the faults of the book we look upon as its greatest excellences. That Goethe did not, like Wieland and Heinse, take us into an imaginary Greek world, or into a fanciful fairyland, nor, like the romanticists, lay the scene of his story in the misty, glorified Middle Ages; that he did not resort to the wonders of Christian mysticism or to those of the fairy tale, but, true to his nature, remained in *Wilhelm Meister*, as in *Werther*, on native soil and in the present, and mirrored the social world known to every one, without falling into dullness and pedantry, as Hermes and Nicolai had done, cannot be reckoned too highly to his praise. Indeed we should have been glad if he had been somewhat more realistic, or more prosaic and simple; if he had left out the secret society, the burial hall in the castle of the uncle, the strangely painful parts of the earlier history of Mignon and the Harpist, and the like; as we should also have been glad if he had given more definite local colour to his novel. It is in fact remarkable that, while he usually makes a strong point of bringing the scenes of his works clearly before our minds, he has here paid little attention to this particular. The great city in which Serlo's stage is located is described only as a "lively commercial city," and Wilhelm's native city is not described at all. Descriptions of landscapes are also extremely rare. One feels that the author's attention is concentrated wholly on the characters.

These are drawn with an unusual degree of care. Only the figures in *Hermann und Dorothea* are to be compared with them in plastic objectivity. By as much as the composition of the characters in *Wilhelm Meister* is richer, the art of delineation in the novel overtowers that in the epic poem. Here Goethe simply revels in the full consciousness of his character-creating power and in the comfortable enjoyment of the large amount of space at his disposal. As though every new creature of his power served only to

inspire him with new delight, he associates with the chief characters an almost interminable series of secondary characters, and endows them all as richly as though each individual were a favourite of his.

What a variety of people he has created! From the purely matter-of-fact and calculating Werner and Melina, to the self-absorbed dreamers, Wilhelm and the Harpist; from the sly, complacent, sinful Philine and the clear-headed, resolute, thoroughly sane Therese to the saintly Beautiful Soul and the ethereal Mignon, hardly a shade of character is lacking of the great variety in the world. One who had lived from childhood on a lonely island in the Pacific Ocean, and had read nothing but *Wilhelm Meister*, would have a sufficient knowledge of men. The persons of the novel are also very true to nature in that none of them is absolutely bad, and none of them, with the exception of Natalie, is absolutely good. The worst of them have one virtue left, the best of them one weakness, which makes a bond of sympathy between them and us.

From no other work can one learn so well what a profound observer of men Goethe was, and with what extreme nicety he was able to invent every trivial act and every carelessly uttered word so as to make them reveal vital elements of character. How many such clever strokes he applied to Philine to make her real! How her good-nature comes out and at the same time her frivolity, when, on a drive, she first throws money to every poor person she meets, and then, when her money is gone, throws her straw hat to a poor girl and her neckcloth to a poor woman! How her pertness is revealed, and at the same time her devotion, in her careful nursing of Wilhelm's wounds, and in her calling to him with a laugh when he wishes to get rid of her: "If I love thee, what is that to thee?" How her mocking defiance, her childlike fondness for tidbits, and her mischievous joy over the misfortunes of others, show themselves in her actions after the company has been robbed on the highway! She sits quietly on her trunk, the only one spared by the brigands, while innuendoes are

flung at her from all sides, and, instead of replying to them, simply plays with the locks on her trunk, draws nuts from her pocket and cracks them. How plainly we see her when, instead of walking down the stairs, like other people, she comes down with a great clatter, singing at the top of her voice.

The author wins almost his greatest triumphs in his portrayal of ordinary, average people, whom writers, as a usual thing, prefer to leave to one side, because they so poorly repay the pains spent upon them. An example of such an average man is Melina. Polite, obliging, engaging, when any one does him a favour, or is in a position to help him; good-naturedly indifferent, when he has nothing to gain; malicious, hateful, deceitful, when anybody does anything prejudicial to his interests or even but stands in his way.

Only rarely does a stroke betray the author's forgetfulness, as, for example, when Barbara, the match-making servant of Mariane and Aurelie, referring back to the position and the death of Mariane, not only speaks the choicest German—which was one of Goethe's principles of style after the Italian journey—but also shows a depth of psychological insight and a moral pathos not in keeping with her character. Here the poet's fire consumed the mask through which he spoke.[43]

From the point of view of general human characteristics it must again be said that the figures are genuine German types of the close of the eighteenth century. Especially is the hero an excellent reflection of the humane belle-lettrist of that time: warm-hearted toward everything good and beautiful, striving after the noblest humanity, but following no definite purpose with seriousness and energy, above all no practical pursuit.

The novel bears the stamp of the times also in its form. All of Goethe's other greater literary creations have, as a rule, a form which towers far above their time, so that even to-day—and apparently for all time to come—this form together with their substance, which is independent

of time, produces an impression of youthful freshness; but such is not the case with *Wilhelm Meister*. Here Goethe has clung to that pedantic fiction, introduced by Rousseau, that the author is merely publishing discovered manuscripts, memoirs, and letters. To be sure, he did the same thing in *Werther*, but there he only rarely allowed the editor to say a word. Here he is constantly interrupting the narration, without producing any serious improvement. On the contrary, it is only too often superfluous insertions, which affect us rather as burdensome and annoying. Often we have to laugh at them, as, for example, when he says with perfect ingenuousness: "The reader will best be able to judge of the effect [of the *Confessions*], when he has become acquainted with the following book," or "Lothario and Jarno carried on a very important conversation, which we should very gladly at this point communicate to our readers, if events did not crowd us so." It strikes us as very strange that he should announce for future publication something for those readers "who are interested in the subject." These interruptions are least objectionable when he appears merely as a critic to approve or disapprove of something, or as a chorus to accompany an event with his emotions.

The fiction that he is publishing his sources should not have been maintained throughout, because one would have to suppose that he had before him a whole collection of memoirs, and even then he could not have drawn from them all the facts that he narrates and all the sentiments that he utters. He forgets his part more than once, as, for instance, when he suddenly represents himself as an ear-witness in the remark: "We should make our story too long, and yet we should not be able to express the charm of the strange conversation which our friend held with the adventurous stranger." On the other hand he excuses his silence by pretending ignorance. But no matter whether he steps before us as an editor who knows only what is in his papers, or as a poet whose divining power detects the most subtle influences of things, in all such cases it disturbs

us in the illusion that we have to do with something real.

To be sure, it is only we who feel this interruption of the illusion as something unpleasant. The eighteenth century, indeed a considerable part of the nineteenth, was delighted with it. The reader felt at home when the author came into close personal relation to him and occasionally began to chat with him. Schiller himself said that in his youth he could find no pleasure in the Shakespearian drama, because in a new work he was accustomed first to look for the author, to become acquainted with his heart, to enter into a discussion with him concerning his subject, whereas Shakespeare was nowhere to be found in his dramas and nowhere gave a statement of his personal views.

Another fault of the technique, and again one which contemporaries did not feel, is the excessive use of direct characterisation. Nowadays even a mediocre novelist would hardly allow himself such conveniences, which are contrary to the rules of higher art, and from this fact we can realise what a development the novel has experienced since the eighteenth century. It has really become literature, a pure work of art, whereas it was then still half a text-book, not a genuine epic, but a "pseudo-epic"; the novelist was not a poet, but a "half-brother of the poet." It is from this standpoint that the composition of *Wilhelm Meister* must be judged as a whole and in its parts. Viewed in this light the doctrinaire insertions no longer occasion surprise. But even though the form, the technique, of the novel be archaic and relegated to the past, its substance is eternal and in spite of the form will endure for ever.

IX

HERMANN UND DOROTHEA

Usual explanation of the origin of the poem—The anecdote—Goethe's silence concerning his source—His poetry and his inner experience—His finished works and his fragments—The "current yield" of his life contained in *Hermann und Dorothea*—Lili's trials and tribulations—Her flight in the disguise of a peasant woman—Her confessions concerning Goethe to Countess von Egloffstein and Bäbe Schulthess—The effect of them on Goethe—Reawakening of his youthful love—The real sources of the poem—Blending of past and present—Goethe's peculiar fondness for this poem—History of its composition—Time and place of the action—Analysis of the plot—The parson—The apothecary—The innkeeper—Hermann—General discussion of marriage by the family and the friends—Hermann's mother—Mother and son—Hermann reveals to her the secret of his love for Dorothea—They lay the matter before the father—The parson speaks for Hermann—The father's conditional consent—The parson and the apothecary sent to the emigrants to investigate—What they learn—Hermann and Dorothea at the well—He engages her as a maid-servant—Dorothea's parting from her friends—The homeward walk—Dorothea neither speaks nor acts like a peasant—The crisis—The solution—Dorothea's former betrothal—Patriotic climax—Liberal and conservative idealism—Blending of action and repose—The characters are types—Faithful reflection of German family life—Reception of the poem—Schiller's praise of it.

WHILE Goethe was still writing the *Lehrjahre* he began to devise the plan of another epic work, *Hermann und Dorothea.*

There are certain difficulties in the way of a satisfactory explanation of the origin of this poem. The usual explanation given is this: By some chance Goethe read an anecdote from the history of the emigrants whom the archbishop of Salzburg drove from their homes in 1732, on account of their Protestant belief. Being pleased with the anecdote, Goethe

transformed it into an epic poem, and laid the scene in the immediate present by substituting for the Salzburgers the Germans fleeing before the French during the war of the revolution.

The anecdote, as it appears in Göcking's *Vollkommene Emigrationsgeschichte*, runs, with slight abbreviations, as follows:

"As the people of Salzburg were journeying through the region of Öttingen the son of a well-to-do citizen of Altmühl came to one of the girls in the procession and asked her how she liked it here in this country. She answered, 'Quite well, sir.' 'Would you be willing to be a servant in my father's house?' he continued. 'Yes, indeed,' she replied.

"The young man had often been admonished by his father to marry, but had never before been able to make up his mind to take the step. As he watched the emigrants march through the village, he caught sight of this particular girl and was pleased with her. So he went to his father and said: 'Father, you have often urged me to marry, and to-day I have at last chosen a bride.' His father asked him who the girl was. He answered, 'She is from Salzburg, and I am very well pleased with her.' He declared further that if his father would not allow him to take her for his wife he would never marry. After the father, together with his friends and the preacher, who was sent for, had long sought in vain to talk the son out of his purpose, and had finally been persuaded to consent to the marriage, the son brought in the girl and presented her to his father.

"The girl thought all the while that they wanted her for a servant. The father naturally supposed that his son had already declared his love to her. So he asked her how she liked his son and whether she were willing to marry him. As she knew nothing about the son's real purpose she thought the father was seeking to make sport of her. She told him he need not mock her; she had been asked to be his servant, and to that end had followed his son to the

house. If he cared to employ her she would serve him with all diligence and faithfulness, and would more than earn her bread; but she would not put up with his mockery. The father still insisted that he was in earnest, and the son then disclosed to her his real purpose in bringing her to the house, namely, that he had an earnest desire to marry her. The girl gazed at him silently for a moment, and then said that if he really were in earnest and wished to have her, she too was willing, and she would cherish him as the apple of her eye. The son gave her a marriage token and straightway she thrust her hand into her bosom, drew out a purse containing two hundred ducats and said that she would give him also a bridal present. Thus the betrothal was solemnised in due form."

Goethe doubtless knew this story and made use of it, though he preserved an unbroken silence on the subject, even after this had been publicly pointed out as his source.[44] The similarity is too striking to admit of any other explanation. But does this account for the origin of the poem? Was the fact that Goethe read the story and recognised in it material for an effective epic enough in itself to inspire him to write that exquisite idyll which has delighted generation after generation with its youthful freshness? Was he like a thousand other poets, both great and small, to whom the mere availableness of a motive is sufficient ground for employing it in their writing, no matter whether they find it in a book or in life, in their own lives, or in the lives of others? Or was he the poet of intensely personal experience[45]—experience which he not only observed with interest, but which he seized upon with his inmost being, and which stirred his deepest emotions? Did not for this very reason the writing of poetry mean to him an act of liberation, pacification, and enlightenment, and the termination of a definite experience? Has he not himself given us, at widely separated intervals, most definite statements on this point? In 1775 he wrote of his works that they were always but the treasured up joys and sorrows of his life. In 1787 he characterised the first four volumes of his works,

which had just appeared, in the words: "There is not a letter in them that has not been lived, felt, enjoyed, suffered, and thought, in connection with what I have experienced." In 1811, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, he called his writings fragments of a great confession, which he was seeking to make complete by means of a narrative of his life. In 1823 he said to Eckermann: "All my poems are occasional poems; they were suggested by events in real life and are based on them." In 1830 he said to the same Eckermann: "I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have neither written nor said anything that I did not draw from my own life, from my moments of pressing danger, and the things which haunted my mind." Those of his contemporaries who had much insight into his life and writings declared the same thing. We need mention but Herder and Wieland. We have already heard what Herder said (p. 35) and so it will suffice to insert here a statement made by Wieland in the year 1794. In a conversation with Böttiger he said he regretted that he knew almost nothing that he had ever written by heart, adding that it was just the opposite with Goethe, who could repeat almost all his works word for word. "For they are emanations of his ego."* In these words Wieland gave pregnant expression to the difference between the poet Goethe and the poet Wieland, or whatever the latter may be called. "Emanations of his ego" can mean nothing other than innermost experiences which were pressing for poetical expression. The same may be true of other poets, but is not necessarily so.

This testimony of the poet, and of his closest companions who understood him best, is borne out by the long series of finished productions which we have in mind when we speak of Goethe, and which he had in mind when he spoke of his works, namely: *Die Laune des Verliebten*, *Die Mitschuldigen*, *Götz*, *Clavigo*, *Stella*, *Die Geschwister*, *Egmont*, *Iphigenie*, *Tasso*, *Faust*, *Werther*, *Wilhelm Meister*, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, and his vast collection of lyric poems. To

**Cf.* Böttiger, *Literarische Zustände und Zeitgenossen*, i., 144.—C.

be sure, he attempted to treat other subjects which occupied his mind, because of the thought they contained, because of the picture of the times which they suggested, or because he was pleased with their poetic qualities; but the fate of such attempts confirms the law to which Goethe was subject. Without exception they either remained fragments, as, for example, *Sokrates*, *Mahomet*, *Cäsar*, *Elpenor*, *Der ewige Jude*, *Die Geheimnisse*, *Die Aufgeregten*, *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch*, *Die natürliche Tochter*, *Achilleis*, and *Pandora*, or they turned out to be insignificant, colourless, and shadowy, as, for example, the operettas, *Der Gross-Cophta*, *Der Bürgergeneral*, and others. His heart's blood either ceased to flow into them after a short time, or never began to flow at all.

Is it possible that *Hermann und Dorothea* may have been an exception in this regard? Is it conceivable that the epic should have been carried to completion, and, although it was suggested by the author's reading, should at the same time be as full of warmth and life as any work born of his own experience? If such were the case we should have to consider it a mere accident that Goethe took from his own life the material for his completed works, the result of a not necessarily inevitable decree of fate, that his experiences seemed to offer him, as a rule, more available material than he found in his reading or in the lives of others. After the conception which we have thus far formed of him we shall refuse to accept such a supposition. We shall do this with the greater justification as the poet himself refers us to his life for the sources of *Hermann und Dorothea*. When he sent the epic to his Zurich friend, Frau Bäbe Schulthess, he said in the letter accompanying it, "As has always been my custom, I have employed in this work all the current yield of my life." This cannot mean his highest attainments in art and worldly wisdom, as there would have been no need of laying special stress upon a thing which goes without saying; it must mean the crystallisation of his most intimate experiences. Hence the clause, "as has always been my custom," places

this poem on an equal footing with his other creations, concerning the connection of which with his life both he and the works themselves furnish such abundance of evidence. This utterance corroborates the one above quoted from the year 1775, and is borne out by the following statement in the *Campagne in Frankreich*, "My production has always kept pace with the course of my life." This was his reason for using the words "current yield." The sentence means, then: In this work have been employed the new experiences which I have collected since the definitive conception of my last work, *Wilhelm Meister*. The period of time referred to is from the summer of 1794 to the autumn of 1796.

What had been Goethe's experience during this period? The most significant occurrence was his friendship with Schiller. This, however, aroused no waves of emotion such as he needed to resort to poetry to calm. In other respects his life ran along undisturbed, and hardly once did he leave the quiet region of Weimar and Jena. For this reason the unrest outside seemed all the greater. The storm of war still raged on both sides of the Rhine and among the poet's acquaintances and friends, even among those most dear to his heart, there were many who were forced to flee from their homes to seek peace and security in the more remote parts of Germany.

Of these many persons there was in reality but one who passed through very remarkable dangers and trials. It was none other than she who was dearest of them all to his heart, the fair betrothed of his youth, Lili. Her situation in life had for some time been well calculated to elicit his most heartfelt sympathy. The wealth and high standing of her husband had threatened to draw her house into the storms of the revolution. Her old motherly friend Demoiselle Delph, of Heidelberg, had written to her, as early as 1792, expressing grave apprehension as to her future, and asking her to consider whether she would not better flee from the dangers threatening her. She declined such advice with great determination: "I cannot and must not yield

to the entreaties made to me. There are circumstances in life when duty must outweigh all other considerations, and when it is necessary to suppress all pusillanimity in order to animate and fortify one's courage." She said she was determined to share the lot of her husband, "however unfortunate he might be."

The truth is that Herr von Türckheim's position was gradually becoming very critical. As he enjoyed the full confidence of his fellow-citizens, he was elected mayor of Strasburg, and his conservative and aristocratic attitude caused no little commotion in administrative circles in Paris. He was soon deposed from office and banished from the city. In order not to jeopardise his property and his person as an emigrant, he remained in France, retiring to Posdorf, a small estate which he owned in Lorraine. This occurred at the end of January, 1793.

Seven months later Goethe came to Heidelberg and paid Demoiselle Delph a visit of a few days. He must have heard there of Lili's fortunes up to that time, and was doubtless not a little affected by the vicissitudes, as well as by the bravery, of his one-time betrothed.

Herr von Türckheim had enjoyed comparative peace in his retreat for about half a year, when he again seemed dangerous to the terrorists. At the beginning of July, 1794, they ordered his apprehension. Having been informed in time of the warrant for his arrest, he fled toward the German boundary, and, when he had reached a place of safety, sent back word to his wife to follow him. In order to avoid suspicion and the possibility of being held with her children as hostages for her fugitive husband, Lili disguised herself as a peasant woman, and set out to walk with her five children, the youngest of whom she carried on her back. She started at six o'clock in the evening, walked the whole night through, and at nine o'clock in the morning arrived in the outskirts of Saarbrücken. To her surprise she found the city already occupied by the French, who had no suspicions against her, it is true, but were so attracted by her beauty that they began to make dangerous

advances to her. Warding off their insolence with moral dignity, she passed by the town and reached the German outposts without further danger. A few days later she arrived in Heidelberg, where she rested for a short time, the guest of her brother, who resided there, and of Demoiselle Delph. At the end of August, after a sojourn of several weeks in Frankfort, the whole family moved to Erlangen, where they remained a year.

Lili there made the acquaintance of Countess Henriette von Egloffstein, who was in close touch with Weimar. When Lili found this out she told the Countess of her former relation to Goethe and confessed that she still clung to him with deep affection. She said that he was the author of her spiritual life and that it would afford her pleasure if he were to know with what cordial and grateful feelings she still remembered him. She expressed herself similarly when she met Bäbe Schulthess in Zurich, in September, 1795. "Remember me to him," she said, "and tell him that I rejoice to cherish in memory the pure image which he left in my soul by his conduct toward me, and that I shall not allow it to be effaced by anything that may be said to me."

When Frau von Egloffstein and Bäbe Schulthess reported to Goethe what Lili had said of him, they added enthusiastic descriptions of the impression which she had made on them. The report of the former we have only in a late reminiscence, according to which the sight of Lili recalled to her the picture of that ideal of most noble womanliness, Iphigenia. Even in her old age she still remembered with "deeply affected soul" the hours she had spent with Lili. One might think that perhaps the long space of time intervening had glorified the picture of Lili in Frau von Egloffstein's fancy, but her testimony finds strong support in the words of the serious, sober-minded Swiss friend, who, in the letter in which she delivered Lili's greetings a few weeks after the visit, wrote: "I saw Lise Türckheim for the first time and enjoyed a few beautiful quiet hours with her. I doubt if I have ever felt immediately

at home with any one as I did with her. Alas! she has greatly declined physically because of her sufferings and adverse fortunes; but her courage is only the more exalted, and the strength of her soul the more firm. . . . If there was ever mortal woman watched over and guided by good spirits, it is she. . . . I felt as refreshed beside her as when I read thy *Iphigenie.*"

One can fancy what emotions these letters must have produced in Goethe's tender soul. In 1779 he had found Lili's home seemingly established and secure, a charming abode of comfort. The revolution, that source of so much misery in the world, had now laid its blighting hand on her and had left her a fugitive, in distress and poverty. Since that memorable visit at her home he had gladly believed, though not without a shade of bitterness, that she was perfectly happy and had everything she needed. Now he learned that he had been deceived, that the separation from him had left a gap that had not been filled, that she, however, had resolutely resisted every feeling of sentimentality, and had devoted herself solely to her family duties.

The fact that she acknowledged her indebtedness to him with perfect plainness and hearty gratitude must have affected him to a quite unusual degree. How much higher and more unbiased was her opinion of him than was that of so many others whom he greatly respected and admired! He had reason to be proud that the seed he had sown had grown so splendidly. "I should have been proud to tell the whole world how much I loved her" (to Eckermann, March 5, 1830). That was truly a "yield" of his life. Lili had vanished from his horizon as Stella; through the eyes of his friends she returned to view as Iphigenia. If at the age of eighty he was able to say in reply to Soret's remarks in praise of Lili's granddaughter—"As you speak with such interest of the amiable young girl, you awaken in me all my old memories. I see charming Lili again before me in all her vivacity, and it seems to me as though I felt again the spell of her blessed presence,"—how much

more strongly he must have felt this spell when Lili herself was brought back to his mind by the suggestive references to her in the letters of Frau von Egloffstein and Bäbe Schulthess!

At first his feelings could not reveal themselves otherwise than under the veil of poetry. But twelve years later, when a letter from Lili unsealed his lips, his old affection burst through the veil with all its force. In December, 1807, he wrote to her: "Allow me to say, that it gave me endless joy to see again after so long a silence a few lines from your dear hand, which I kiss a thousand times in memory of those days which I count among the happiest of my life. May you live happily and peacefully after so many outward sufferings and trials, during which I have often had cause to think of your steadfastness and lasting greatness! . . . Ever your grateful Goethe." The letter was sealed with a cupid armed with a lion's skin and a bludgeon.

The reawakening of Goethe's tender feelings was favoured in a high degree by the circumstance that after his rupture with Frau von Stein his heart was destitute of love, and that, in general, after his return from Italy, his Weimar circle of friends no longer manifested toward him the same degree of warmth, and still less of understanding. They were all dissatisfied with him. Involuntarily his eyes turned back to the days of his youth, which arose before him more beautiful than ever. The crown of his reminiscences was his relation to Lili. It convinced him that his life at that time, even on the side of love, had been full, fruitful, and pure, not mere play. The sweet sorrow to which the remembrance of those experiences transported him is echoed in the dedication to *Faust*, which he wrote in June, 1797, after he had finished *Hermann und Dorothea:*

Ihr bringt mit Euch die Bilder froher Tage,
Und manche liebe Schatten ſteigen auf;
Gleich einer alten, halb verklung'nen Sage
Kommt erſte Lieb' und Freundſchaft mit herauf.

. . . . . .

Zerſtoben iſt das freundliche Gedränge,
Verklungen ach! der erſte Widerklang.
Mein Leid ertönt der unbekannten Menge,
Ihr Beifall ſelbſt macht meinem Herzen bang.

. . . . . .

Was ich beſitze, ſeh' ich wie im weiten
Und was verſchwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.*

It is still more inwardly and more definitely voiced in a letter which he wrote two years later to Lili's relative, Johann Georg D'Orville, the witness and companion of those never-to-be-forgotten days at Offenbach: "As little as we can replace brothers and sisters can we win new friends like those whom the early associations of youth, long since terminated, procured for us. In our maturer years we still have assurance and choice, but the blissful necessity of our youth never returns to us." As youth rose before him so full of charm, not only in memory, but also in living witnesses, even in the person of the beautiful, dearly beloved betrothed of his early life, he must have felt most keenly the need of holding fast for ever this golden picture, and making real through his poetry what had vanished from his grasp. His soul must have burned with the desire to take the wings of poesy and fly back to the days of his youth and there celebrate the union with Lili which reality had denied him, and which had found a very unsatisfactory realisation in *Stella*.

Whether the anecdote of the Salzburg maiden came back to his memory at the time when his heart was elated by

* Ye fill my soul with scenes of youthful pleasures,
And many shades belovèd rise again;
Like legends old and half-forgotten treasures,
Come first true love and friendship in your train.

. . . . . .

Long since dispersed that throng of spirits sainted!
Alas! the first clear echo died away.
My sorrow falls on ears yet unacquainted,
E'en their applause doth bring my heart dismay.

. . . . . .

What I possess as in the distance seeing,
What vanished coming into vital being.

these happy experiences of the past and present, or whether mere accident brought the story to his attention again, suffice it to say, he found in it an excellent form into which he could pour his youthful reminiscences, the fortunes of Lili, and present conditions, and melt them together into a beautiful whole. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* he speaks of his gift for blending together the past and the present in his emotions. This talent is expressed in many of his larger as well as smaller works, but nowhere more felicitously than in *Hermann und Dorothea.*

The years 1775 and 1795 melt into one. Goethe pictured himself and his parents, as they appeared in 1775, under the masks of Hermann and his parents; under the mask of Dorothea he portrayed Lili, as she appeared before her marriage, but with her maturity and painful experiences during the days of the revolution.[46]

The advantage which he gained here, as elsewhere, by introducing facts of real life into his poetry was accompanied also by certain disadvantages. Without the closest attention, which is not the chief concern of a poet working in the glow of inspiration, it was not possible to avoid leaving slight flaws to remind one of the ingredient parts of the amalgam. We shall meet them here and there, and they will confirm our conjectures concerning the origin of the poem.

Bearing in mind this process of composition we shall understand fully why it was that Goethe neither confirmed nor contradicted the published statements concerning his source, and why he was able to say in his old age that *Hermann und Dorothea* was almost the only one of his longer poems which he still enjoyed, and which he could never read without being deeply affected. The most of his other works had too painful memories attached to them. One need only recall how he held himself aloof from *Iphigenie* and *Tasso.*

Goethe began to work on the poem at the end of the year 1794. This coincides very well with the time when it was possible for him to have received the first news of

the fortunes and confessions of Lili. It was his first intention to give the poem the form of a drama, and this original dramatic conception still shines through the completed work. He finally decided in favour of the epic form, which was better suited to the material and to the riper years of the poet. So long as *Wilhelm Meister* was unfinished the work of composition was postponed. Only after the novel had been given the last touches, in August, 1796, did he take up the poem, which then grew with wonderful rapidity. Between the 11th and 19th of September he wrote almost two thirds of the work under the eyes of Schiller in Jena, astonishing Schiller by producing on the average one hundred and fifty lines a day. Then there came a rather long pause, but by the middle of March of the following year the poem was finished,—during another sojourn in Jena. It remained under the file till June, and appeared in print in October.

By placing the events of the poem in August, 1795,[47] Goethe procured for himself the advantage of being able to choose as the scene of the action a landscape near the Rhine and still untouched by the war,—a landscape in which vineyards, orchards, and grainfields flourished in abundance, with the river, hills, and mountain ranges to furnish a beautiful and most picturesque background. The more fascinating the environment, the more charming the scenes which occur in it. The more profound the peace and the richer the harvest, the stronger the contrast with the poor fugitives and the regions devastated by the war, and the more earnest our wish that this happy corner of the world may continue to escape the scourge of that relentless fury. It is probable that the poet had in mind the valley of the Neckar above Heidelberg. Strasburg, Frankfort, and Mannheim[48] are the nearest cities of any size, and they are the cities which his father wishes Hermann to visit; the valley winds among fertile hills, and in the distance one sees the mountains "on the other side." Then, too, we must not forget that the fugitive Lili found her first resting place in Heidelberg.

In order to preserve the idyllic or, rather, true-to-nature character of the epic the poet was obliged to introduce us to simple conditions, conditions "under which man is still reared as a human being near to nature." He might have laid the scene of the poem in a village, without in any way doing violence to the probability of the action. Voss had done so in his *Luise*, which had suggested to Goethe the writing of this poem and had served him as a model. But his happy instinct led him to keep the small town of the emigrant tale. This afforded the same simplicity as a village, especially the common pursuit of agriculture, and at the same time made possible the variety of trades and types found in a town. Here the apothecary and the merchant could appear along with the parson and the landlord, and music and architecture, as well as the social life of the upper middle class, and interest in town government, could play their parts.

Thus the outward conditions are most happily chosen for the epic.

First Canto. The beginning itself is very dramatic. No description of time and place, no invocation of the Muse, not even an epic formula introducing the speaker. The poem begins immediately with the words of the keeper of the Golden Lion, and these words contain enough to make us understand and visualise the situation.

The weather is very hot; there is not a cloud in the sky. The town seems deserted: everybody has gone out to the causeway, about an hour's walk from the town, in order to see the procession of their fellow-countrymen from across the Rhine fleeing before the French. The innkeeper and his wife have remained at home; but they have sent their son Hermann with a carriage full of food and clothing, in this way striking a compromise between their duty to their neighbours and their enjoyment of quiet comfort.

Gradually the townsmen who have gone out to see the fugitives return to their homes, the rich merchant among their number. He drives in with his daughters in a fine landau, which presumably recalls an old train of associations

in the innkeeper's mind. The apothecary follows, then the parson. Both being good friends of the innkeeper and his wife, they sit down on the bench beside them. The apothecary begins at once to inveigh against the curiosity and frivolity which have driven people out to the causeway, although we have a suspicion that he had had no other motive for going himself. The parson is unwilling to let these words of reproach go unnoticed. He defends, with deep earnestness, these impulses which "good mother nature" has placed in the breast of man.

The parson is introduced with special ceremony. Whereas the poet usually allows the persons to characterise themselves by what they do and say, in this instance he disregards the rules of art and gives us a full description of the character. He says of his age that he is "a youth, more nearly a man," and calls him noble, sensible, and well versed in the ways of man and the world, as well as in the Scriptures, and the best secular literature. Doubtless the fact that this man is brought into special prominence sprang chiefly from the poet's desire that the abundance of worldly wisdom put into his mouth should from the outset command close attention. He proceeds at once to denounce the doctrine of the sinful nature of man, a doctrine which, to Goethe's great annoyance, had received only a short time before (in 1793) considerable support from Kant's doctrine of radical evil. The worthy parson does not succeed, it is true, in holding the ear of the landlady. It has certainly never occurred to her either to look upon nature as evil—she feels herself too much a part of nature for that. So, without adding further words to this discussion, she briefly and impatiently begs the gentlemen to tell her what they have seen.

The apothecary quiets her curiosity. He is put forward to execute the miniature painting, which would not have been entirely proper for the parson, who is supposed to have an eye only for generalities. Besides, the talkative apothecary may have been watching for an opportunity to recount all the lamentable scenes he has witnessed. His

first effusions fully satisfy the landlord, who begs that the continuation be postponed, or, at least, that the friends fortify themselves, before listening to it. He then invites them to step with him into the little hall, where it is cooler, and where they can drive away their cares over a glass of the vintage of '83.

Heiter klangen sogleich die Gläser des Wirtes und Pfarrers;
Doch unbeweglich hielt der dritte denkend das seine.*

We are surprised at this last turn. We should be inclined to exchange the rôles of the apothecary and the parson; but we should prove to be bunglers where Goethe is a master. The apothecary is an egoist and a realist; his life is devoted to temporal things. In the mirror of the fate of the emigrants he sees his own existence threatened. The nature of the innkeeper differs but little from that of the apothecary in the matter of love of possessions, but he is an adept in the art of living and knows how to carry himself over the worries of the moment. The parson is sufficiently protected against the loss of his cheerful spirit by his faith and worldly wisdom. The innkeeper, as a spiritual kinsman of the apothecary, divines immediately the latter's gloomy thoughts and seeks first to dispel them by pointing to God's help, which was so beautifully demonstrated at the time the town was burned. He soon passes to more tangible arguments, and praises the Rhine, which he calls an "all-hindering moat," finally reminding the apothecary that everything indicates peace. In words full of feeling he paints a fancy picture of the celebration of peace, adding the special wish that the same bells which proclaim peace may also peal out the glad tidings of the wedding of his son. At this moment Hermann drives thundering through the doorway. He has returned from his good Samaritan's journey.

Second Canto. The parson notices a great change in him; he looks more lively and happy than ever before. Confronted by the searching looks and allusions of the

* Merrily soon rang the glass of the host on that of the parson;
Silent held his the third, who was lost in deep meditation.

parson Hermann remains perfectly calm. We feel immediately that we have to do with a young man of character. With ingenuous warmth he tells of his experiences: how he looked after the emigrants, how a girl, who was skilfully driving a wagon drawn by oxen, asked him for linen for a mother and her newborn babe, who were lying in the wagon, and how he decided to give her, not only the linen, but everything he had brought, for her own use and for distribution among the others. "Thou wilt dispense them with judgment, while I by chance must be governed." Nothing in his story betrays a budding romance. The turning over of all his gifts to Dorothea is sufficiently accounted for in that it was the most expedient thing to do. Nevertheless our interest in Dorothea is already aroused. We have learned how she cares sympathetically for others, how discreet she is, and how she approaches Hermann's carriage "with composure," that is to say with dignity, in spite of her great distress.

In consideration of these descriptions the apothecary counts himself fortunate to be a bachelor. "The single man most easily escapes danger." The poet employs these utterances of the apothecary to draw from Hermann in an easy and natural way the secret of his heart's experiences on the day's drive. Hermann protests emphatically against the views of the apothecary, saying that man must not think of himself alone, either in good fortune or in bad. He adds that it is at just such times that many a good girl needs the protection of a husband, and that he himself has to-day felt more inclined to marry than ever before. This his mother, quickly interrupting him, approves with all her heart; for she and her husband had joined hands in wedlock after the great fire, over the ruins of their parents' homes. It has also given the father great pleasure to hear his son, who has heretofore avoided the society of girls, speak of marrying, but that the mother, in order to support her son's intentions, brings forward her own example does not altogether harmonise with his marriage policy. He seeks to limit the practical application, saying that it is

always hard to begin at the bottom, especially as everything is daily growing dearer, and that a wife without means will in the end be despised by her husband. "As a servant he treats her who entered his house like a servant, bearing her bundle." Then, in order not to leave Hermann in the dark as to the trend of his desires, he proposes abruptly that Hermann choose for his wife a daughter of the rich merchant whom we have seen driving over the market-place in his landau.

"Modestly then the son to his father's entreaties made answer." Annoyed as he must have been by his father's harsh, ignoble harangue, Hermann's childlike respect holds him in proper bounds. He confesses that he did at one time think of selecting one of the merchant's daughters, but that he has so often been found fault with and jeered at by them, because he is not as elegant in his appearance as the "business boys," and, to add insult to injury, because he knows nothing about the *Magic Flute*, that he has taken a vow never again to cross the threshold of that house. The son's declaration calls forth a storm of wrath from his father, who says that it has always vexed him to see that Hermann has no ambition to rise higher, that, like a hired servant, he feels at home only in the stable and out in the field. He warns his son never to let it enter his mind to bring home to him a peasant girl as a daughter-in-law. He has set his heart on a refined daughter-in-law, who can play the piano and gather about her on Sunday the best people of the town, after the fashion of the neighbour's daughters. Again the son, whom his father's words have most deeply wounded and angered, manages to preserve his bearing of respect and reverence. He holds his tongue, because, in his state of excitement, he cannot give a becoming answer. Then, "softly pressing the latch," he leaves the room, not in stubborn wrath, but in silent sorrow. His filial reverence is not outward show.

The conflict is outlined in all clearness even before Hermann's love for the "maiden from over the Rhine" has been revealed.

Third Canto. The son's withdrawal has somewhat disturbed the innkeeper, who now passes to more general considerations, in order to account for his dissatisfaction with Hermann. One must move forward, he says; the son must surpass the father; but he fears that a son who has no aspirations will remain behind his father. The mother can now no longer contain herself. "I will not have my Hermann scolded," are her vigorous words. He will some day be a model citizen and peasant, she continues, but his father is stifling all the spirit in his breast by daily finding fault with him; his father wants to mould him according to his mind, but every man must be educated according to the gifts that God has given him. Hurling these and similar condemnatory thunderbolts at her husband, she leaves the room to hasten after her son and pacify him. The host, recognising fully the truthfulness of her words, accepts his defeat with a good countenance, and mutters something about wives who are like children. One is always expected to be praising and flattering, he says. The apothecary declares that, from the standpoint of money, he is wholly on the side of the host.

Fourth Canto. While the poet has the mother looking for her son in all his favourite places—on the bench before the house, in the stable, in the garden, in the vineyard, in the fields—he has an opportunity to spread before us all the property belonging to the innkeeper, its size, variety, and condition. The richer this property seems to us, especially with the abundant crops of mid-summer, the more remarkable will appear Hermann's decision, of which we are soon to hear. The first glimpse his mother catches of Hermann is under a pear tree, on the highest point of the broad rolling hill which rises behind the garden. The place is chosen by the poet with fine discrimination. One who has been so painfully wounded, and is so deeply sensitive as Hermann, is instinctively inclined to ascend to a quiet height, from which the eye reaches far out into the distance, there to lose himself in endless space, and forget himself as an individual. The secret attraction of the

place is heightened for Hermann by the fact that his thoughts themselves are roaming in the distance, away from home, and that up there he is able to look toward the region through which the girl he loves is passing. Just at the moment when his mother, coming up from behind, lays her hand upon him he is wiping a tear from his eye. He desires to conceal his sadness from her, but it is too late; she has seen plainly the tear. When asked the cause of it, he has not a word to say about the bitter insults and threats he has received from his father; he ascribes his tears to the feeling of sympathy which binds him to the exiled fellow-countrymen whose misery he has to-day witnessed. He says that the sight of them has inspired him with the determination to enter the army, in order to protect the fatherland against the terrible enemy, whom floods and mountains will not hold back for ever.

Wahrlich, wäre die Kraft der deutſchen Jugend beiſammen,
An der Grenze, verbündet, nicht nachzugeben den Fremden,
O, ſie ſollten uns nicht den herrlichen Boden betreten
Und vor unſeren Augen die Früchte des Landes verzehren
. . . . . von hier aus
Geh' ich gerad in die Stadt, und übergebe den Kriegern
Dieſen Arm und dies Herz, dem Vaterlande zu dienen.*

Here for the first time he touches upon the painful reproach which his father has administered to him, adding briefly that his father may now say whether or not his son's bosom is animated by a sense of honour, and whether or not he has aspirations toward higher things. His mother cannot quite believe the words of her son. She has never before heard him utter such thoughts. She implores him not to conceal from her his true meaning. He replies that she is mistaken; that he is fully in earnest, although despair

* Verily, if but the strength of our German youth were together,
Watching the border, leagued not to yield to the foreigners' army,
Oh! they should ne'er see the day they set foot in our glorious country,
Boldly the fruits of the land before our faces consuming.
. . . . . from the spot that I stand on
Hence will I straight to the town, to devote to the army of warriors
These my arms and my heart, to fight for the land of my fathers.

is as largely responsible for his determination as love of country. To her insistent request that he open his heart to her entirely he makes no immediate reply, but, overcome by his pain, falls into her arms. Here again, in this strange combination of manliness and weakness, we recognise Goethe as the prototype of Hermann. In gentle, sincere words Hermann describes how he has always clung to his parents in reverence and love, and how, notwithstanding, he has never received anything but blame and injury from his father. His father is now growing old, and he knows that he is to inherit a wealthy estate, yet he takes no pleasure in it—for, he adds, by way of explanation, unconsciously passing from his vexation over his father's treatment to the real cause of his sorrow:

. . . ſeh' ich dann dort das Hinterhaus, wo an dem Giebel
Sich das Fenſter uns zeigt von meinem Stübchen im Dache;
Denk' ich die Zeiten zurück, wie manche Nacht ich den Mond ſchon
Dort erwartet und ſchon ſo manchen Morgen die Sonne,
Wenn der geſunde Schlaf mir nur wenige Stunden genügte;
Ach! Da kommt mir ſo einſam vor, wie die Kammer, der Hof und
Garten, das herrliche Feld, das über die Hügel ſich hinſtreckt;
Alles liegt ſo öde vor mir: ich entbehre der Gattin.*

If the little attic room, out of which Hermann looks longingly for the rising of the sun and the moon, reminds one of the poet's own life, how much more so the age at which Hermann is here supposed to have arrived. According to other facts mentioned in the poem he cannot be more than nineteen, but we must here consider him at least twenty-five or twenty-six, which was Goethe's age in 1775, the year in which he was betrothed to Lili.

The mother immediately surmises that Hermann's

* When, in the rear of the house, away up there in the gable
Yonder window I see, that looks from my room in the attic;
When I recall the times, how many a night for the moonrise,
Many a morn for the sun's first beams I 've patiently waited,
When but a few short hours of wholesome slumber sufficed me;
Ah! as lonely to me as the chamber seem then the garden,
Yard, and glorious fields, which stretch o'er the hills to the distance;
Dreary it all lies before me, wanting a partner to share it.

longing for a wife is already fixed upon a definite object, the "exiled maiden." Hermann does not deny this, but, in view of his father's declarations, he is wholly without hope, and so begs his mother to let him go whither despair is driving him. She is unwilling to consent to such a step and begs him to go down with her and say a kind word to his father, who has a right to expect this of him, "for he is a father." Toward evening, when the effect of the wine is gone, the father will be more gentle, and the parson will know how to help them.

Alſo ſprach ſie behende und zog, vom Steine ſich hebend,
Auch vom Sitze den Sohn, den willig folgenden.*

With this characteristic picture ends the remarkable conversation, which brought tears to Goethe's eyes as he read it to Schiller from the manuscript.

Fifth and Sixth Cantos. Just as the mother supposed, the parson and the apothecary are still sitting with her husband, engaged in a spirited conversation. The parson now comes more into the foreground. He had been struck at the outset by a change in Hermann's nature, but has since seen clearly what is stirring the young man's soul. He now frames his words cleverly, so as to support Hermann. Indeed it is well, he says, for man to strive after new things, but the inclination to cling to the old is also a laudable virtue. This calm, patient type of mind is especially becoming in a husbandman, for trees and animals do not grow up overnight, and the soil does not change every year. Moreover, in the restless, envious thoughts of the townspeople, especially of the women, lie many dangers.

Segnet immer darum des Sohnes ruhig Bemühen
Und die Gattin, die einſt er, die gleichgeſinnte, ſich wählet†

The parson has just finished speaking when the mother enters, leading her son by the hand, and reminds the father how they have often spoken of Hermann's marriage and

* Quickly thus she addressed him and then, from the stone seat arising,
Quickly drew to his feet the son, now gladly obeying.

† Bless then and welcome the quiet, peaceful pursuits of thy Hermann,
Bless, too, the like-minded wife, who some day by him will be chosen.

how they have wished he might choose for himself a girl whom he might love with a warm and happy love. Now he has chosen, guided by such emotions, and his choice has fallen on the strange girl whom he met on the causeway. Then she adds briefly and emphatically, almost dictatorially:

Gib ſie ihm oder er bleibt, ſo ſchwur er, im ledigen Stande.*

Hermann has not taken such a vow; but the mother, as a true woman, considers herself justified in drawing such a conclusion from his words, and in pronouncing it at this point. This was sure to be much more effective than Hermann's intention of going to the war, which would only have exasperated the innkeeper, who, moreover, would not have believed that his son ever had any such intention. This vow seems credible and threatens the innkeeper with the extinction of his house. Undecided and resentful, he is silent, and continues so, even after Hermann has supported his mother's remarks with the warm words of conviction:

. . . Die gebt mir, Vater! Mein Herz hat
Rein und ſicher gewählt; Euch iſt ſie die würdigſte Tochter.†

Then, as we had hoped, the parson intervenes. As the poet takes pains to inform us, he arises from his seat to speak, and with wise arguments appeals to the innkeeper's better nature. Among other things he says that it is always the moment which alone decides, even after long deliberation; and the innkeeper should not start back in fright, when what he has long desired suddenly appears

. . . Es hat die Erſcheinung fürwahr nicht
Jetzt die Geſtalt des Wunſches, ſo wie Ihr ihn etwa geheget.
Denn die Wünſche verhüllen uns ſelbſt das Gewünſchte; die Gaben
Kommen von oben herab in ihren eignen Geſtalten.‡

* Give him this maid, or he swears for ever unwed to continue.

† . . . Father, give thy consent; my heart hath
Clearly and trustily chosen; a daughter most worthy she'll make thee.

‡ . . . Just now, it is true, the fulfilment
Bears not the form of the wish which so long by you has been cherished.
Often the thing that we wish is hid from our sight by our wishes;
Blessings come down from above, in the form that to each is best [suited.

To these considerations he joins a most beautiful encomium on Hermann, speaking of him as morally pure, a beloved, good, sensible son, who has always desired only what is proper for him, and hence it is safe to say that the girl he desires is the right girl for him. Love has made of him a mature man. "His fate is decided." Even after this speech the innkeeper remains silent. The decision is too hard for him. The apothecary has long been restless, for fear that in the exuberance of noble feeling some folly may be committed, and that perhaps some important act may be accomplished in the house of his friends without his participation. He makes use of the pause to advise the family to make haste slowly, and offers his services, to drive out to the emigrants and make some inquiries concerning the girl. Hermann is heartily in favour of this, but, being unwilling to leave everything to the proposed mission of the apothecary, begs him to take the parson along as a companion. To his still silent father he praises the girl in eloquent terms, and cites, as an example worthy of imitation, his father's own blessed act, after the burning of the town. Now at last the father finds something to say. His speech is not long; he makes some chiding remarks about his son and his wife, foresees tears and defiance, which will trouble his life, and then gladly crosses the bridge of retreat which has been built for him by the sending out of the parson and the apothecary.

In order not to give the epic too dramatic a form, and to restore again the reader's repose after these manifold excitements, the poet now retards the development of the plot, by introducing a series of genre and landscape pictures, together with some conversations on more general topics.

Hermann himself drives the two friends of the family to the village where the emigrants have stopped to rest. After giving the explorers an exact description of Dorothea, he waits with the carriage, in the shade of the lindens, by the well at the edge of the village. Before these men find the girl they meet with the judge of the fugitive community

and the parson engages him in a long conversation. As their talk grows tedious to the apothecary, he slips away alone to look for the maiden. The parson's prolonged conversation is not wholly without results. Imperceptibly it has drifted around to Dorothea. The judge tells of a beautiful deed of heroism by which she protected herself and other girls from the assaults of ribald soldiers. The apothecary, having meanwhile found Dorothea, reports his discovery to the parson, and when they point her out to the judge he assures them that it is the same girl of whom he has just been speaking, and that she deserves the highest praise on other accounts, as well. He refers, among other things, to the noble composure with which she bears the loss of her betrothed, who was put to death on the scaffold in Paris. These two traits show plainly the influence of Lili's experiences. Dorothea has made a most favourable impression on the parson, and there would have been no need of the judge's encomiums to convince him of the excellent character of the girl. To his mind such a perfect body must house a perfect soul.

He hastens to Hermann in order not to make him wait longer for the joyful message. To his astonishment Hermann shows no sign of joy at the receipt of the news. There has suddenly come over him the fear that Dorothea may be already betrothed. Although the parson and the apothecary might easily allay his fears by telling him what they have heard from the judge, concerning the death of Dorothea's betrothed, they surprise us by keeping their information to themselves. The parson maintains an unbroken silence on the subject; the apothecary shrugs his shoulders, and suggests that Hermann go himself and try his luck with the girl.

The two men act as though they were still ignorant of Dorothea's having once been engaged. We shall have another occasion to observe the same bearing on their part.

Being very willing to woo Dorothea for himself, and to hear from her lips the words which are to decide his

fate, Hermann sends the two fatherly friends home with the carriage, saying that he will return afoot. In this way Goethe has arranged for a meeting of the lovers by themselves, and prepared the way for a series of most delightful scenes.

Seventh Canto. The first of these scenes glows with warmest feeling. A man of such profound emotions, and agitated by such a multitude of thoughts, as Hermann, does not rush immediately into a decisive act. As the carriage rolls away he stands still for a long time, and stares at the clouds of dust rising from beneath the wheels of the vehicle. By and by the dust blows away. His eyes now hasten along the footpath, which leads through the grain-field to the pear tree, the very way which he will follow this evening when he goes home, accompanied, perhaps, by the girl he loves. As in a dream, the form of the girl seems to him to hover along the path. He starts out of his day-dream, turns about, and sees Dorothea really before him. She is coming with pitchers, to draw water at the well. They strike up an indifferent conversation. He asks why she goes so far from the village for water, and she explains to him her reasons. He then descends the steps with her, helps her draw water—

Und ſie ſahen geſpiegelt ihr Bild in der Bläue des Himmels
Schwanken, und nickten ſich zu, und grüßten ſich freundlich im Spiegel.*

An embarrassing pause ensues. "Let me drink," is all that Hermann is able to say. Again there is silence. Dorothea might now go away, but she is chained to the spot, as it were. She willingly sits down with Hermann on the stone border of the well, and asks how it comes that she finds him here, without horses and carriage. A searching question. He is in no haste to reply. In spite of the friendly greeting between their images in the water, he is faint-hearted. He gazes once more into her eyes and "feels composed and encouraged." Then he discovers

* And in the blue of the heavens seeing their floating reflections,
They one another salute with a friendly nod in the mirror.

new grounds for hesitation. The look in her eyes is not love, and so he does not venture to speak of love. He tells about his parents, about the large household, and that his mother longs for a maid-servant who will help her like a daughter. He tells Dorothea further how he has praised her to his parents, and that he has come to communicate to her their wishes. At this point his power of speech fails him. It is only with difficulty that he has been able to stammer out what he has already had to say. Dorothea helps him out of his embarrassment, saying, "Be not afraid to speak on."

Ihr beleidigt mich nicht, ich hab' es dankbar empfunden.
Sagt es nur grad heraus; mich kann das Wort nicht erschrecken:
Dingen möchtet Ihr mich als Magd für Vater und Mutter.*

She says that she is willing, for it is not well for a girl who is alone to wander about in the world. Hermann is rejoiced to hear that she is willing to go with him, and allows her misunderstanding to go uncorrected, having made up his mind to postpone wooing her till she has become settled in the home. With his parents and the large household to fall back on, he will have more courage, and more hope of overcoming even the obstacle of the fatal ring, which he has meanwhile discovered on her finger. They both arise and, as though by accident, look again into the clear water and behold once more their faces reflected in its heavenly depths—"and sweet longing comes o'er them." Thus ends the scene at the well. To praise it would but destroy its magic charm.

Hermann and Dorothea return to the village, where there is a touching scene of parting between Dorothea, the family of the new mother, and her other friends and acquaintances. Everything throws strong light upon the appreciation, love, and admiration which she enjoys. Finally, when she feels that she must now leave, the children

* No offense dost thou give me; with grateful feelings I 've listened.
Tell me frankly thy thought; no words of thine can affright me:
Thou wouldst like me to hire as a maid for thy father and mother.

clutch her skirts, screaming and weeping violently, and refuse to let their second mother go.

The little ones are quieted by deceiving promises, and it is with difficulty that Hermann tears Dorothea away from the last embraces and the "far-waving handkerchiefs." When Goethe read this scene aloud to Schiller he was again unable to refrain from tears.

Eighth Canto. Now follows the homeward walk. The sun sinks in the west behind dark storm clouds, the full moon rises in its splendour in the east. In this romantic evening scene, with the young couple all alone in the midst of the waving grain, and in the light-dotted shade of the pear tree and of the arbour in the vineyard, there lay a great temptation for the poet to entice from the lips of the lovers the first soft whisperings of love, and to let them revel in the joy of their new-born happiness.

Goethe rejected this melodramatic effect in favour of the higher truth, which demanded further reserve on the part of both youth and maiden. He also kept in mind the dénouement of the final canto, which such a scene would have robbed of much of its effectiveness. And yet the almost indifferent conversation which the two carry on, their occasional silence, and their mutual confidences convince us thoroughly of the warm love heaving in their breasts as they walk along the way. Without a word being said about love, the whole canto leaves upon us the impression of an ardent love song. At the end we feel perfectly clear in our minds that both Hermann and Dorothea are certain of their love. Their hearts have found each other, not so much by means of a few tender allusions as through the harmony into which their short association has brought them, thanks to that invisible and indescribable influence which is exerted back and forth between two people destined to be lovers.

The manner in which Hermann's filial reverence is shown in his answers to Dorothea's questions concerning the nature of his parents is an exquisite touch, as is also the tender way in which he accounts for the frankness of

his utterances as due to the confidence which Dorothea has inspired in him. Delightful is the poet's hint that Hermann is glad to be standing in the shade of the pear tree when Dorothea puts to him the alluring question of how she shall conduct herself toward him. As he answers he takes her hand, feels the ring, and is unable to say anything further than: "Let thy heart be thy guide and follow it freely in all things." Charming is the description, which follows, of the walk down through the vineyard. The storm clouds completely obscure the moon, and in the darkness Dorothea sprains her foot on the loosely lying stone steps and sinks on Hermann's breast; but he, in his purity and chasteness, "stiff as a marble statue, does not press her more close to his bosom." One is reminded of Werther, who is frightened when he embraces Lotte, even though but in a dream.

At the same time the beautiful symbolism of the approaching storm and the spraining of Dorothea's foot make us feel that a happy solution is not to be expected until further hindrances have been surmounted.

Perfect as the canto is, it is lacking in one particular: neither the words nor the actions of Dorothea betray the fact that she is a peasant girl,[49] although there are plenty of opportunities for her to do so. Hermann shows her the fields and the vineyard, and speaks of the approaching harvest; and they walk through the orchard and the kitchen-garden. It would be very natural for her to show some interest in these things, and to display her knowledge of agriculture; if not in words—from which she might be excused on the ground of her endeavour to overcome the pleasant embarrassment of the situation by means of indifferent remarks—at least by some little act that, as a result of long years of practice at her work, has become second nature with her, and a thing that she is more than likely to do when she wishes to conceal her inward agitation. How differently the landlady acts! Although she is full of unrest when she sets out to seek her son, nevertheless on passing through the garden she hastily straightens

up the supports of the fruit trees, and removes a few worms from the cabbage. But Dorothea is neither here nor anywhere else portrayed as a peasant girl. That she drives the ox-cart is too little characteristic to be taken into consideration. The other menial labour which she performs is forced upon her by necessity and has, in itself, nothing to do with the peasant's calling. It would have been especially easy for the poet to have pointed out her sphere in life when she declared her willingness to work as a maid-servant. When the question of polite behaviour came up she descanted on how from youth up she had learned "outward graces," when she might just as well have called attention to her familiarity with the various duties connected with husbandry. The weaving in of this feature was the more to be expected, as it was contained in the source of the plot. There we read the true-to-life statement: "She then told him about all the kinds of peasant labour that she could perform. She knew how to feed the cattle, milk the cows, till the fields, make hay, and do other things of the kind." That Goethe failed to use this portion of his source, and neglected to supply anything from the rich fund of his own observations to characterise Dorothea's social position can be explained in no more probable way than by assuming that he became so completely absorbed in his model that he lost sight of the necessary demands of the poetic mask. Such observations are no longer anything new to us.

Ninth Canto. We now turn to the last division of the poem. With the same art with which Goethe introduces new difficulties and arouses new suspense in the last act of *Iphigenie*, when everything seems to tend toward an easy and quick solution, he does it here. While he has the lovers tarry, that Dorothea may bandage her foot, he takes us quickly into the parlour of the inn, where the friends have meanwhile made their report to the father. The mother runs restlessly in and out, looks at the approaching storm, watches for her son's coming, and, by her impatience and anxiety, makes her husband as uncomfortable as herself.

Then the door opens and the stately youth and maiden enter. "Almost too small seems the door to allow their tall figures to enter." Hermann introduces the girl to his parents and then quickly whispers to the parson to help him out of his embarrassment, saying that the girl thinks she is hired as a maid-servant. But before the parson has an opportunity to essay his skill the father brings on a crisis. He praises his son's taste and, with a paternal pride quite unusual for him, tactlessly remarks to the girl that it was doubtless not very hard for her to follow his son.

Dorothea is deeply offended. She blushes crimson, the tears come to her eyes, and she complains bitterly that she, a poor stranger, should be made the object of such scorn. Inasmuch as the misunderstanding has given rise to an offence, the parson considers it advisable not to explain the mistake at once, but to use it further to test Dorothea's true nature. He finds fault with her for taking offence at jests, such as are everywhere common, and gives it as his opinion that with such sensitive feelings she is not suited to be a servant. He had calculated the effect of his words correctly. In an outburst of emotion Dorothea defends herself against the reproach of over-sensitiveness. She has felt the words so keenly, she says, because she has conceived a deep admiration for the son, and has secretly hoped by superior service to win him for herself. The mockery has opened her eyes to the insurmountable hindrances in the way of their union, and now she can no longer bear to be near him. She will return to the emigrants, in spite of storm, thunder, and rain, which have begun meanwhile to rage outside. Having thus spoken she turns with determination to the door.

One who does not take the nature of the innkeeper into strict account would expect him now at least to correct himself and explain to Dorothea clearly that he has not thought of mockery. But such a thing would be out of keeping with his character and the position which he took in the beginning with respect to Hermann's marriage project. It would not be so very displeasing to him if the

plan were to go to pieces at the last moment. So he prefers to show very clearly how vexatious the whole affair has become to him, in spite of his submission, and turns to leave the room with the words, "I 'm going to bed." This declaration introduces a little comic intermezzo into the touching, dramatic scene, and gives us time to recover. The mother holds back Dorothea with both hands, and the son holds the father. Hermann, exhorted by the parson, now has the courage to clear up the misunderstanding and to confess his love to Dorothea.

Und es ſchaute das Mädchen mit tiefer Rührung zum Jüngling
Und vermied nicht Umarmung und Kuß.*

Even now, after everything has been satisfactorily explained, the father shows not the least sign of making amends for his mistake, nor of extending a worthy greeting to his future daughter-in-law. The poet places too high a value on paternal dignity and on Dorothea's noble-mindedness to admit of her holding back timidly on this account. Rather, he makes her disregard ceremony, step up to the father, bow gracefully before him, kiss his hand affectionately, and with "charming graciousness" beg him to forgive her for the vexation which she has caused him.

. . . Wozu die Magd ſich verpflichtet,
Treu zu liebendem Dienſt, den ſoll die Tochter Euch leiſten.†

The father, unable to resist this tender magnanimity, embraces his daughter-in-law, "hiding his tears." Thoas and Goethe's father both arise before our minds. The mother does not wait for Dorothea to step up to her for a kiss; she herself goes to her daughter, kisses her heartily, and shakes her hand. "The weeping women were speechless."

The epic seems to be at an end. Every problem is most happily solved. But this good-natured, familiar ending,

* Then did the maiden look on the youth with tend'rest emotion,
Nor avoided his kiss and embrace.

† . . . What the maid had willingly promised,
Faithful service of love, thou shalt receive from the daughter.

in spite of the psychological depth and greatness contained in it, did not satisfy Goethe. The poem was at the very end to be brought again into connection with the great movements and thoughts of the times which had determined the fate of Dorothea, and was thus to receive as its wider background and outlook, instead of the lives of individuals, the life of all mankind; instead of the limited present, the limitless future. At the same time it was to fulfil a political and patriotic duty which had long been on the poet's mind.

For this purpose he introduces, shortly before the end, a new hindrance, for which, as we think, Lili's fate provided him with the material. That he made use of this material, and in the way in which he did, entitles him to great praise. As we already know, Dorothea had been betrothed once before. Before Lili was married to Herr von Türckheim she had twice been engaged,—to Goethe and to a man by the name of Bernard. This second betrothal had been forced upon her by her family, shortly after the dissolving of her relation to Goethe. But before they had had time to be married, Bernard lost his property, fled from home, and died in Jamaica. Herr von Türckheim was more than once in danger of the guillotine. Goethe combined these features in the person of Dorothea's first betrothed. Taken by itself, a former betrothal of the heroine would have been so far from the poet's mind that one can hardly assume that he hit upon it by pure invention.

When the parson, in order formally to seal the betrothal, places the mother's ring on Dorothea's finger, he notices, to his astonishment, that she already wears a ring on that finger, and asks her whether this is the second time that she has been engaged to marry. This astonishment arouses in turn our astonishment, since we know that the parson is already well informed about the first betrothal. So, instead of seeking about for all sorts of artificial explanations of this passage, and of the first one where we were struck with the parson's apparent ignorance of the facts, it seems much simpler to assume that, soon after

Goethe wrote the speech of the judge, he changed his plan, but forgot to erase the verses containing the information about the betrothal.[50] Goethe was a very peculiar editor: he worked with a closed and an open eye,—open to those things upon which he had fixed his attention from the beginning, closed to everything else. Hence almost no one of his works is free from striking contradictions, inaccuracies, errors, which later extend even to names.

Remembrance of the former betrothal affords a most beautiful opportunity for bringing the character of Dorothea and the tone of the poem to a climax. Although standing in the presence of her newly-won betrothed, she says not a word in disparagement of the high virtues of the man to whom she was formerly engaged, nor does she conceal her sorrow over the loss of such a noble friend. She describes his enthusiasm for the new liberty which the revolution in France had brought to mankind, his eagerness to have a share in the new state, his courage to face any danger, his conviction that, in such great times, the individual does not belong to himself, but has to serve the whole race, and that for the sake of the whole race he himself must part from home, possessions, and loved one. He saw clearly that at first everything dissolved back into chaos and night, but he also hoped that out of this chaos would be formed a new world.

> Du bewahrſt mir dein Herz; und finden dereinſt wir uns wieder
> Über den Trümmern der Welt, ſo ſind wir erneute Geſchöpfe,
> Umgebildet und frei und unabhängig vom Schickſal.*

One who has daily seen life and possessions endangered is independent of fate. Hence he further admonished his beloved not to value life or any other possessions too highly, and, if attracted to a new home and new surroundings, not to take too firm a foothold, but to let the day be always sacred to her, to work faithfully, and to love the living with a pure love. Remembering these last words

* Thou wilt thy heart for me keep; and if ever we in the future
Meet on the world's ruined pile, we shall then appear as new creatures,
Changed throughout, as free as the air, and of fate independent.

of wisdom, Dorothea clings to Hermann in deep emotion.

Dorothea's words carry us at once out of the narrow inn parlour upon the world-wide scene of action, where, beside many other great conflicts, liberal and conservative idealism are contending with each other for the mastery. The principle of aggressive, self-sacrificing idealism is duly represented in the person of her first betrothed. In the manner in which he is described by Dorothea we recognise the higher point of view which Goethe himself had gained with reference to the revolution. There still remained for him the task of doing justice to conservative idealism. The idealism of the youth who had turned enthusiastically to the new régime was beautiful and majestic, but what good had he accomplished under the existing conditions? Had he not fallen a victim to sordid terrorists, who lurked behind the shield of exalted ideas? Was it right to leave wife and possessions in order to chase after the chimerical realisation of abstract ideas? Right to think lightly of the possessions upon which, first of all, our civilisation rests, in order to give a foundationless existence to those higher possessions? Right not to allow one's self to become firmly rooted, in order to avoid suffering with every new change of fortune, new pain over the loss of earthly possessions?

In contrast with this view of life, Hermann represents the conservative principle. He is determined to hold fast his possessions, which he interprets in the broad sense of property, wife, parents, God, and law. He desires to stand thoroughly rooted to the ground:

Denn der Menſch, der zur ſchwankenden Zeit auch ſchwankend geſinnt iſt,
Der vermehret das Übel und breitet es weiter und weiter;
Aber wer feſt auf dem Sinne beharrt, der bildet die Welt ſich.*

The only way in which the poet was able and willing to express his own views was through the medium of extremely cautious suggestions, hence he gave Hermann the

* He, whose mind in wavering times is given to waver,
Only increases the evil, spreading it ever more widely;
He who stands by his views will fashion the world to his liking.

appearance of not intending to condemn utterly the terrible movement which had shaken Germany to such a depth. He merely employs the mild expression, that it "does not become" the German to carry the movement further. It is his duty, rather, to erect a wall to oppose it, in order,—if we may be permitted to add to his statement—to dam the swollen mountain torrents filled with rocks and slime, and convert them into a clear lake. In order to bring this duty thoroughly to the consciousness of the Germans Hermann must close with an appeal to his fellow-countrymen. As he himself is ready to give his life for the things which he considers the highest—and these words place his spirit of self-sacrifice on an equality with that of Dorothea's first betrothed—so may every German be. "Then would might arise against might and we should all enjoy peace." Hermann repeats the brave, patriotic sentiments which he expressed under the pear tree in the afternoon. There it was his sorrow over his apparent loss, here it is his joy over what he has won, that occasions the outburst. "What is mine is now more mine than ever." Thus the poet thoughtfully touches upon the wise concatenation by means of which our souls are transported from egoism to public-spirited sacrifice.

The whole poem, which began with genial comfort, closes with grand pathos. From the quiet market-place of the small town, where the old people are sitting, and the cotton dressing gown, over which the host sheds a tear as it is taken away to be given to the emigrants, we are taken to a world theatre, and to the most exalted ideas which animate the human breast. By this dramatic quality *Hermann und Dorothea* is strikingly distinguished from its immediate predecessor, Voss's *Luise*, with which it has always been compared. In the *Luise* quiet repose reigns supreme; lovely soft music rings through its entire length, making it truly an idyll; whereas Goethe's poem deserves to be called an idyll only from the point of view of the simple conditions which it portrays, not from the point of view of its action, which advances rapidly and at

times borders on the tragical. Deep repose, which is an essential of the genuine idyll, was by no means Goethe's aim; he strove, in accordance with the esthetics of the classical period, to avoid all continued, one-sided states of mind. Action and repose were to be charmingly interspersed. He intended that we should never go to sleep, and never be over-excited.

He has used more than one artistic means to attain this end. In the matter of language he has forced epic repose on the dramatic flow by means of a measured style; in the matter of material the retarding insertions tend in the same direction; and yet he gave the poem most perfect equilibrium by means of a very real blending together of contrasts.

Take, for example, the beginning. Everything is so peaceful and quiet that it seems we might almost hear the buzzing of a fly; there is an atmosphere of happy contentment, as though the whole world were enjoying heavenly peace. But out of the conversation we immediately get a glimpse of the opposite picture; the hurrying train of emigrants, sad mishaps, screams and lamentations, war and revolution, catch our spiritual eye and ear. Further on, the passionate scene between mother and son occurs beneath the pear tree, while all around nature is lying in a dreamy afternoon slumber; the ripening fruit hangs quietly from the boughs, the golden grain sways to and fro in softly flowing waves, and the blue mountains rise dimly visible in the distance. At the well we are surrounded by a most mysterious stillness, the wind hardly stirs the leaves of the old lindens glistening in the evening sunlight, but in the hearts of the young lovers there is a mighty surging, and we are drawn by magic to share in these concealed emotions. We have an equally happy blending of contrasts as the lovers take their homeward way. Again, in the last canto, to mention just one more of the many examples, the security and cosiness of the narrow inn parlour form a pleasing contrast to the emotional storm within and the war of the elements without.

Beside these contrasts in details the background of

the whole poem reveals the same effective union of movement and repose. Two ages clash: the one passive, easy-going, dawdling, serene, and peaceable, the other active, strict, strenuous, serious, and warlike. While the sight of the one inclines us to comfortable negligence and quiet enjoyment, the other spurs us on to intense application and energetic determination. The poet carries these contrasts even into the art of gardening, the furniture, and the wardrobe. The cotton dressing gown, fleeing before the surtout and the frogged coat, is a most humorous symbol of the great revolutionary movement of the times.

When Goethe, having finished the poem, wrote to Schiller: "All the advantages which I have turned to account I have learned from formative art," one of the things he doubtless had in mind was this mutual blending into each other of repose and action. There is also no doubt that when he said formative art he was thinking of the plastic art of the ancients, which in this poem above all others celebrates its greatest triumph. This was also what he meant in his letter to Heinrich Meyer, who had for months been living in the atmosphere of antique art, when he spoke of the court of highest instance before which the poem could be brought. "The question will be, whether under the modern dress you will recognise that the human proportions and the forms of the limbs are true and genuine." He looked forward with assurance to the answer; for he had created genuine, living human beings, of full individual distinctness.

By avoiding naturalistic excess and preciseness he gave the persons representative characters. Parson, host, and hostess are types of their class, the apothecary is the type of a bachelor. Host and hostess are, further, types of fathers and mothers, even if, in honour of the fathers, we feel inclined to assume that there is a smaller number of them back of the host than there is of mothers behind the hostess. Finally, they, together with the apothecary, are typical inhabitants of a small town. Hermann and Dorothea are types, but not in the sense of representatives

of a class of people distinguished from other classes by definite outward marks. Nobody will recognise in Hermann the typical well-to-do peasant's son,—for he is portrayed as such, and not as an innkeeper's son—nor in Dorothea a typical peasant girl who has enjoyed the better training of her class. If one, deceived by the mask, were to take her for such a girl, it is only necessary to fancy her, with her speeches, on the stage, in order immediately to become conscious of the mistake. They are, on the other hand, types of a class of people, distinguished by their spiritual nobility, who in their thoughts and feelings have liberated themselves from bondage by means of birth, occupation, residence, and such agencies. It was such people, always rare, but always to be found, that Goethe wished to introduce into his poem, in order to equip it suitably for coming ages. The character of the parson was endowed somewhat to this end, but, having a religious significance, he could not at the same time lend poetry to the work. This the lovers alone were able to do. Facing the alternatives of either sacrificing his most beautiful figures to the lower middle class and peasant circle, which he had so felicitously chosen for his poem, or stretching a little the exact boundary of this circle in favour of these figures, he was in no doubt as to his choice. As a skilled painter he put on a few colours to cover up the inexact places and was satisfied. Every one who does not prize exact outward truth above everything else will share his satisfaction.

We have already seen what occasioned him, from the very beginning, to raise the pair of lovers to a plane far above their natural sphere in life. As they were to satisfy the inward impulse which impelled him to write the poem, he had to make them copies of himself and Lili. Never did Goethe give a truer and more complete picture of himself, as he appeared under normal conditions in his youth. Compliance, gentleness, tenderness, considerateness, reverence; on the other hand, firmness, bravery, hatred of injustice, violent anger at impertinence toward his parents (as shown in the poem by Hermann's schoolmates who

make sport of his father), persistent desire for what is suited to him, thoughtfulness, purity, willing devotion to the general good, depth of feeling, keen appreciation of nature, lively fancy—these are just as characteristic of Goethe as they are of Hermann.

No less accurately does Dorothea correspond to her prototype. We need only refer to what we have above heard about Lili, partly from herself and partly from others, and to what Goethe said of her enduring greatness. We might easily multiply these evidences.[51]

What Goethe said of the characters in *Jery und Bätely* is also true of *Hermann und Dorothea:* "Noble figures are put into the peasants' clothes."

Not only have the persons of the epic, taken separately, some general class characteristics; this is also true of them when grouped in a family. It is the family life of the German middle class that is mirrored in the poem. Here we again see the author's correct tact in his choice of representatives of this class for the leading parts in the action. If he had chosen either a bureaucratic or a noble family, or the family of a preacher, as Voss did in his *Luise*, he would not have been able to produce anything of such general and permanent significance. Not so general, because the sphere would have been too narrow; not so permanent, because the position at least of the bureaucrat and the noble is even to-day very much changed, while that of the independent burgher, who is thrown upon his own resources, as we see him in the host, will hardly ever change. The host, even in his day, lived in a city which seems to have enjoyed complete self-government, in which he took an active part. Goethe may have thought of a small imperial city, such as he had seen in Friedberg, near Frankfort, and in Wetzlar.

Through the innkeeper's family there runs also a fundamental moral tone,[52] which, fortunately, is even to-day typical of the German family. In one particular Goethe elevated this fundamental tone considerably above the general average, namely, in the relation of the son to his parents,

especially to his father. In this he was aided by the fact that he did not choose to give a uniform roseate hue to the relation between parent and child, as Voss had done in his *Luise*. On the contrary, he allowed the opposite characteristics of father and son to stand out with perfect clearness, thus making it possible for the son to unfold all his child-like reverence. In this respect the poem stands so high that it deserves to be called the song of songs of child's love and child's humility. Such a poem could never have been written except by a man of whom it was possible to say with Zimmermann (letter to Frau von Stein of the year 1775): "Oh, if you had only seen the great man in the presence of his father and mother, as the most decorous (*le plus honnête*) and most amiable of all sons, you would have found it hard not to see him through the medium of love."*

If we look back over all these qualities of the poem we must agree with Böttiger, that it fulfils all the conditions requisite to make of it a "folk-poem," that its beauties should "cast an equally powerful spell over all classes and all conditions." But unfortunately the meter, the hexameter, which is fundamentally foreign to the genius of the German language, has prevented the poem from reaching this high position. Nevertheless it has permanently captivated greater numbers than *Werther*, and as great as the first part of *Faust*. The applause with which it was received was extraordinary, and would have been universal, if Goethe had not made himself such bitter enemies by the *Xenien*. He was able, however, to endure the carping criticisms of the poem, for it was most admired by those best able to judge of it: Wilhelm von Humboldt, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and Schiller. We shall not quote anything from the long-winded letter which it moved Wilhelm von Humboldt to write, nor from Schlegel's long review; we shall content ourselves with citing a few sentences from Schiller, whose significant strokes bring vividly before us both the work and its creator.

* *Cf.* vol. i., p. 229.—C.

On the 21st of July, 1797, Schiller wrote to Heinrich Meyer: "His epic poem you have read; you will confess that it is the culmination of his own art and of all our modern art. . . . While we others must laboriously collect and try, in order slowly to produce something tolerable, he needs only to shake the tree gently, in order to cause the most beautiful fruit to fall into his lap, ripe and full of substance. It is incredible how easily he now gathers the fruit of a well applied life and an uninterrupted education, how significant and sure are all his steps, and how well his clear understanding of himself and of objects preserves him from vain striving and from groping about to find his way."

X

FROM 1797 TO 1806

Project of a third journey to Italy—Purpose, a monumental history of Italian art—Heinrich Meyer—Goethe and Meyer to travel together—Meyer travels alone—Goethe, about to follow, makes his will and burns his correspondence—He takes Christiane and August to see his mother—Journey to Switzerland—Visit with Meyer—Italian journey given up—Return to Weimar—Nine quiet years—The theatre—Goethe an architect—A labour problem—Art exhibitions—The University—*Farbenlehre*—Philosophy of nature—Advancement of German art—*Propylāen*—Goethe's artistic confession of faith—The characteristic in art—New friends—Zelter—Great variety of interests—*Achilleis*—First part of *Faust*, and *Helena*—*Palāophron und Neoterpe*—Illness—Irritability—*Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*—Second illness—Partial recovery—Death of Schiller—Friedrich August Wolf.

HERMANN UND DOROTHEA being finished, what was to be next on the programme? There were plenty of poetical and scientific problems awaiting solution, but the poet's heart was set on Italy. The southland had once for all taken possession of his soul, and as one never tires of beholding a beloved object, his longing for Italy had not yet been satisfied. In his knowledge of the country he felt great gaps, which he was very eager to fill. This time he was to gain a complete picture of Italy and to perpetuate it for himself and the world in a monumental work, of which he planned to make the development of art the chief content. With the depth of Goethe's conception of the problem, this development could neither be understood nor portrayed in its final analysis without an exact geological, physical, and topographical description of the country, and a history of its

agriculture, which was further to be supplemented by a political history. His studies were accordingly to be extended to include all these fields,—a grandiose plan, such as no one has yet carried out in the history of the art of any country.

As early as the summer of 1795 Goethe had planned the journey for the near future. In order to gain the greatest benefit from his travels he wished to be accompanied by his Roman teacher and friend, the painter Heinrich Meyer, who had been living with him since November, 1791. He prized and loved this noble Swiss as he did few people in the world. The fact that Meyer's intimate associations with Goethe lasted undisturbed for over forty years is sufficient reason for pausing to make ourselves better acquainted with him.

Heinrich Meyer (born in 1760) was one of those staunch, whole-souled, unpretentious Swiss natures, who by their awkward, massive figures, as well as by their taciturnity and simplicity, betray their descent from a sturdy race of shepherds and peasants. Such natures suited our poet exactly. Meyer had a by no means small number of other admirable qualities, including clever understanding, great tact, untiring zeal for education, high appreciation of everything beautiful, felicitous, dry humour, imperturbable equanimity, harmony of soul, and thorough truthfulness. For these reasons Goethe gave him the distinguished title of a "glorious man." Yet, high as he placed Meyer as a man, he doubtless ranked him still higher as a connoisseur of art. He ascribed to him an artistic insight dating back thousands of years. He believed that Meyer could see a work of art through and through; that his eye could not be deceived by anything, that it always and everywhere singled out what was essential and decisive. Concerning what is essential and decisive both from the point of view of absolute esthetics, and from that of historical development, there gradually grew up such a complete harmony of views between these two friends that in their old age it was often difficult to arouse

any discussion between them. They would sit together happy for hours at a time, only occasionally breaking the silence to assure each other by a disconnected word that they entertained the same view. If Meyer lacked anything in Goethe's estimation it was fully made up for by the fact that he was a sympathetic appreciator of the poet's writings. More than this, Goethe occasionally found in him an excellent collaborator. We have discovered this to our surprise since the opening of the Goethe Archives, when, among other things, it became known that the finely toned description in the *Wanderjahre* of the homeward voyage of the market people on the lake is entirely the work of Meyer.

Goethe spared no pains to secure this highly favoured man permanently at his side. At first he held him by means of ducal stipends, by a position as teacher and director of the Weimar School of Drawing. It was to him a source of exquisite delight "to strive after the same treasures with such a distinguished man, and to preserve and elaborate them with the same mind." However, he did not wish to have Meyer for his own benefit alone; he was pursuing the higher aim of joining with him in the purification and direction of German artistic life.

Other contemporaries who knew Meyer well differed little from Goethe in their judgment of him. The most favourable opinion was expressed by Schiller, who makes the Greek genius address these words to him:

> Tauſend andern verſtummt, die mit taubem Herzen ihn fragen,
> Dir, dem Verwandten und Freund, redet vertraulich der Geiſt.*

It was in company with this man that Goethe wished to go on his journey to the south. As the restlessness of world events and the unfinished state of *Wilhelm Meister* prevented his departure at the time planned, in the autumn of 1795, he sent Meyer in advance to begin at least the collection of material for the history of Italian art. It did not seem as though Goethe would very soon be able to

* Silent to deaf-hearted thousands, who eagerly ply him with questions,
Freely the spirit to thee speaketh as kinsman and friend.

follow. The year 1796 brought war to both Germany and Italy, and, even if Goethe had considered it possible for him to leave Weimar, a journey could not have been carried out without exposure to dangers and serious delays. Not until the spring of 1797, when peace had been restored in Germany and the war in Italy seemed to be nearing the end, was he able to think seriously of setting out. To his young friend in Rome, Fritz Bury, he had already expressed the hope of embracing him again on sacred ground, when a new postponement became necessary on account of the Duke's prolonged absence. Meanwhile this period of waiting was opportune for his poetic productivity; it was the time of his friendship with Schiller. A series of smaller poems came from his pen in rapid succession: *Der Zauberlehrling*, *Der neue Pausias und sein Blumenmädchen*, *Der Schatzgräber*, *Die Braut von Korinth*, *Der Gott und die Bajadere*, *An Mignon*, the *Zueignung* to *Faust*—all with such ease and perfection that we are again reminded of Schiller's words about the beautiful fruit, which falls with a gentle shake of Goethe's tree of life.

Finally, toward the end of July, Goethe was able to get away. To be sure, he planned for the present to go no farther than Switzerland. Meanwhile Meyer, who had fallen ill in Italy, had returned to his home in Stäfa on the Lake of Zurich and planned to spend there the period of his convalescence. There was some hope, of course, that Meyer on his recovery would cross the Alps with Goethe; if not there still remained the possibility of travelling alone in the promised land. As in the latter case it could not be foreseen how long he would be gone on the journey, nor whether in the course of so long a stay he might not be summoned to that "undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns," he made a will bequeathing his property to his son and Christiane, and burned the greater part of his correspondence since the year 1772, so that it might not fall into improper hands. The same considerations made it appear to him necessary that Christiane and August become acquainted with his mother So

CHRISTIANE

(Reproduced from Könnecke's *Bilderatlas*)

he took them with him as far as Frankfort, where they arrived on the 3rd of August. He himself remained in his native city for three weeks, but he sent Christiane and August back to Weimar after a four days' visit, in spite of the fact that his mother had received them cordially. The illegitimate relation may have been a source of embarrassment to him among his many relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

From the very beginning of his journey he carried on his studies with the greatest thoroughness. What he had planned for Italy was practiced on the way, so far as time permitted, except that in Germany and Switzerland his heart was set more upon the understanding of existing conditions than of their historical development. Character of the soil, agriculture, commerce, industry, art, science, politics, society, and many other things were included among his observations and faithfully entered in the records of his travels, which he had outlined before leaving home according to a comprehensive, well-designed plan. With these records he filed also all the public papers that came into his hands, such as daily papers, weeklies, extracts of sermons, government regulations, play bills, and price-lists. He first wrote down the opinions he formed from observation and reading, then discussed them with men well versed in such matters, and added the new information and experience to his record. "I am thus collecting material," he writes from Frankfort, "which in the future will certainly be very interesting as outward and inward history. With my previous knowledge and my intellectual practice, I can gather a great mass, if my desire to continue work holds out for a while." Of especial value to him were the reports concerning the French troops, with whom the people of Frankfort had become exceedingly well acquainted during the last two years. What had been the trend of development in the republican army since 1792 and 1793? He now heard much, not only about the harshness of their requisitions, about extortions and excesses, but also about the seriousness and reserve of the young

generals, about the order and activity of their chanceries, about the public spirit of the soldiers, "about the strong tendency of all toward one end." After the receipt of such information he at once felt certain that "in armies of this kind a peculiar energy and a strange power must be at work." The successes of Archduke Karl, who through a swift succession of victories within a few months had driven back the French from the Raab to the other side of the Rhine, did not cause him to waver in his judgment, for the greater victories of young Bonaparte in Italy showed only too clearly on whose banner victory would perch in the final battle between the old Europe and the new.

This time it was very hard for Goethe to part from Frankfort. The beauty and fertility of the region, the city's lively international commerce, association with the anatomist Sömmering, a good opera, a rich variety of art treasures, the affection of old friends, and the love of his mother, were the strong bonds that held him back. Almost all these factors had existed on previous visits; but it seemed as though he now for the first time enjoyed these privileges with an entirely free soul, and as though, with the change of residence,—his mother had sold and left the old home—he assumed also a change of attitude toward his native city. He was oppressed neither by remembrances of the past nor by desires for the future. The thought of settling in Frankfort, which had occupied him so seriously in 1792, had since been definitely given up. "The parting from my good mother was not without its deeply affecting side, for it was the first opportunity we had had in so long a time to become a little bit accustomed to one another again." This reference, a few days later, to his feelings at the moment of parting is couched in these subdued words so as to avoid reviving his pain. There was something presageful about the separation; mother and son were never again to see each other.

On the 25th of August, Goethe resumed his journey, going first to Heidelberg. The situation of the city be-

tween the wooded heights and the fertile plain, with the blue mountains across the Rhine in the background, seemed to him ideal. From there he went to Heilbronn, where he spent his birthday alone near the prison in which Götz had been confined. Stuttgart was his next resting place, and he tarried there a week, becoming well acquainted with Dannecker, of whom he grew to be very fond both as a man and as an artist. Other acquaintances were Architect Thouret, whom he secured later for the building of the Palace in Weimar, Composer Zumsteeg, and Rapp, the lover of art. From Stuttgart he went to Tübingen, where he was for a week the guest of Cotta, the publisher of *Die Horen*, and later of Goethe's works. The poet convinced himself to his complete satisfaction that the University of Tübingen, in spite of the larger sums of money devoted to it, was far behind that of Jena. The best Swabian scholars, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, and Paulus, had been allowed to go to Jena. After four days of further travel, one of which was devoted to the falls of the Rhine near Schaffhausen, Goethe arrived in Zurich, where he made but a short visit for the present, in order as soon as possible to join his friend Meyer in Stäfa, and to have plenty of time to examine his Italian collections and discuss with him his experiences and the work that he had done. After a week spent with Meyer had temporarily satisfied his thirst, Goethe wished to take advantage of the favourable season for a visit to the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons and the St. Gothard, "the old friends which had exerted so much power over him in former years." He took the same road with Meyer which he had followed with Passavant in 1775, namely the route by the way of Richterswyl and Einsiedeln to Schwyz. The man of forty-eight was no longer as fleet-footed as he had been at twenty-six. He groaned over the bad road which leads down from the Schwyzer Haken, and one has the feeling that he arrived in Schwyz out of sorts and physically exhausted. In 1775 he had remarked concerning the same road: "Ten P.M. in Schwyz. Tired and in good spirits from running down

the mountain. Full of thirst and laughter. Loud rejoicing till twelve."

The rest of the journey was better and the enjoyment of it on the whole greater. Passing by the Rigi, the wanderers went direct to Brunnen, whence they crossed over in a boat to Flüelen, in order to take the St. Gothard road up to the summit of the Pass, and back down again. The sight of the localities made sacred by the Tell-legend, on the Urner See and the St. Gothard road, suggested to him the plan of a Tell-epic, in which Gessler was to be an easy-going tyrant, and Tell a simple, sturdy, solitary carrier, like those who had guided him over the Furca in 1779. On his return Goethe was overtaken in the midst of "the formless mountains" by the news of the death of Christiane Neumann, and the elegy *Euphrosyne*, which he dedicated to her as an expression of his profound grief, is a lasting memorial to the deceased and to the sublime natural scenery in the midst of which he received the sad tidings.

From Flüelen the travellers went to Beckenried, Stans, Küssnacht and Zug, and returned to the lake of Zurich at Horgen. On the eleven days' tour they had been favoured with most beautiful autumn weather. Goethe again took up his lodgings in Stäfa, with the situation and rich culture of which he was delighted. Meyer's descriptions of older and more recent works of art and the discussions of them showed no signs of coming to an end. It was a joyfully exciting intermezzo when the box containing Meyer's copy of *Aldobrandini Wedding*, which still hangs in Goethe's house in the Frauenplan, arrived safely in Stäfa. He rejoiced that it had escaped Bonaparte, whose power was extending far and wide. This is the first time that we find in Goethe's letters the name of the man who was later to cast such a strong spell over him.

Time had worn on gradually to the second half of October, and it now became necessary to decide whether to stay or to depart, whether to go forward or to turn back. Goethe was not a little inclined to spend the winter at Stäfa and wait for the spring to go to Italy—or to France. The

Republic of France under the Directory had won his confidence, and he would have liked to see what impression the new order of things would make on him; but thoughts of his domestic relations turned him homeward. He knew that his son August and his household were none too well cared for by Christiane; indeed, he did not have unlimited confidence in her fidelity. He had written from Stäfa to his pretty, light-hearted mistress, repeating his admonition of former occasions, not to do too much ogling. The tortures of jealousy at the close of *Alexis und Dora* (1796) sprang from the depths of the poet's own heart.*

Meyer doubtless used all his influence to support Goethe in his determination to return home. Having scarcely recovered from his illness, he had little desire to go back again to beautiful, but uncomfortable and unwholesome Italy, which was now in such a state of unrest. Neither did a tour of France offer any attractions for him. Besides, he probably approved the reasons for which Schiller had begged him to persuade his friend to return. "You will agree with me," Schiller had written, "that with the culmination to which Goethe has now attained he must give more thought to the representation of the beautiful form which he has given himself than to the search for new material. . . . When of thousands who make the attempt there is one who succeeds in making of himself a beautiful, perfect whole, he can, in my opinion, do nothing better than seek every possible kind of expression of his personality; for no matter how much farther he progresses he will have nothing higher to give. Wherefore I confess that whatsoever he might gain for certain definite purposes by a long sojourn in Italy would seem to me for ever lost from the point of view of his first and highest purpose." We can only agree with Schiller. If Goethe were to have carried out the plans he had in mind, Italy would have absorbed all his time for years, and if he had then returned home the working up of his material would have claimed all his strength again for a long period. He himself may later

*Cf. *Br.*, xii, 307.—C.

have adopted Schiller's view as his own; for he never afterward so much as planned another journey to Italy.

As Goethe was obliged to give up the cherished plan it afforded him a double consolation to be able at least to take Meyer home with him as a talking mirror of Italy. First they spent several days in Zurich, which, on his outward journey, Goethe had only touched in passing. Frankfort had presented to the poet on this journey a more pleasing aspect than ever before, but just the opposite was true of the city on the Limmat. The two homes which had been dearest to him in Zurich, the Lavaters' and the Schulthesses', were now estranged from him. He himself had closed the Lavaters' door with firm, determined will; the Schulthesses closed their door on him much against his will. He thought that he was still the same as ever toward his clever, discriminating, soulful, friend, but she felt the change that had come over him. She noticed what had forced itself upon all of Goethe's older friends after his Italian journey, namely, that he no longer opened his heart to them with his former fulness, frankness, and warmth. Explanations, instead of improving matters, only made them worse, and this "beautiful, pure" relation, as Bäbe had called it only a short time before (July 25, 1797), gradually became a thing of the past.

On the return journey Goethe retraced his route as far as Stuttgart. Then he turned aside to Nuremberg, where he tarried ten days. Unfortunately we know almost nothing about what he did during that time. The society of Knebel, whom he met there, and of the ambassadors of the Franconian Districts, together with the many works of art and the antiquities, kept him so busy that he entirely neglected his correspondence and his diary.[53] Concerning those days we find in his diary nothing but the names of those who dined at the *table d'hôte* in the Roter Hahn, which is certainly very little to satisfy our curiosity. These were entered in the book by his faithful servant.

On the 15th of November he left Nuremberg and on the 20th arrived in Weimar.

Goethe now spent nine quiet years. Looked at from without, his life during this period underwent no change of particular importance. He became involved in no love affairs, his official and domestic relations remained the same, he undertook no long journey. Between Weimar and Jena, however, he was back and forth a great deal. He felt more at home in Jena. He could work there better and with greater freedom. He became noticeably inclined to take his ease and to grow sedentary in his habits, which exerted no good influence on his health. He now walked little and rode horseback none. He preferred to drive and encouraged this inclination by the purchase of an equipage. His visit to the fair at Buttstädt for the purpose of buying horses is one of the characteristic features of this period and of the human physiognomy of the Olympian.

His inclination to take his ease was only physical. Intellectually he was untiring. He engaged in strenuous activities of an infinite variety, so that his desire for physical rest was perhaps but a result of the great intellectual exertions to which he subjected himself.

His activity was pre-eminently of a practical and scientific nature. He devoted himself to the theatre with great zeal, being spurred on by Schiller's appreciative sympathy and by the dramatic productions of his friend, which were maturing in those fruitful years, and the worthy staging of which was to him a matter of sentiment. The desire to make his stage strong in the artistic style which scorns fidelity to the commonplace, and the inspiration which he received from Wilhelm von Humboldt's descriptions of the dramatic art of Paris, led him to adapt Voltaire to the Weimar stage. He also lost himself in daring theatrical experiments with Terence, and in all sorts of romantic attempts with Italian and Spanish writers. Even weak opera librettos, such as *Die Zauberflöte*, engaged his attention to such an extent, chiefly because of their unrealistic style, that he endeavoured to improve them or to write sequels to them. In order to be able to give his actors an early training in his methods he opened in 1803 a theatrical

school for young aspirants, which soon numbered twelve pupils, and of which he was the director and sole teacher. In order to give the Weimar Theatre a worthy appearance and the room necessary to meet the larger demands growing out of its exalted position, he remodelled it in 1798, while for the affiliated theatre in Lauchstädt he constructed an entirely new and suitable building.

The greatest amount of labour in connection with his technical activity as an architect came from superintending the construction of the Palace. This had been begun in 1791, was prosecuted with greater energy from 1798 on, and finally completed in 1803. Here again Goethe had an opportunity to feel the burden of his gifts. In spite of all the architects his technical and artistic understanding made him the soul of the building, and in the end he superintended the work of every carpenter and stuccoer. And as with him one interest always aroused another he sought to abate the social abuses which he discovered. In the engagement of the journeymen, for example, he endeavoured to avoid the master-workmen, because they retained for themselves a not inconsiderable share of the wages of the journeymen as compensation for securing employment for them.

Another kind of practical activity was his labour for the advancement of art. He collected money for prizes, determined in consultation with Meyer the things for which prizes should be offered, and exhibited publicly the works submitted, together with other works of living artists. With great pains and many vexations he arranged altogether seven art exhibitions in the little capital between the years 1799 and 1805.

A further field to engage his thought and attention was the betterment of conditions at the University of Jena. The work of calling and retaining efficient professors, providing the institution with scientific collections and a larger library, equipping and managing the other institutes connected with the University, improving the periodicals published by the learned world of Jena,—all this work

made at that time especially heavy drafts on his strength.

In addition to these things he had many small matters of business to attend to in connection with his supervision of the department of arts and sciences and with his relation to the Duke; and, as though he had not had enough to do, he further increased his burdens in 1798 by the purchase of the Oberrossla freehold estate.[54] "To be sure, I shall never think of administering it," he reported to Knebel after the purchase had been made, "but if I wish merely to have a clear idea of what I really own, I must venture into the mysterious field of husbandry." In order to study this "mysterious field," to carry out his plans for necessary buildings and improvements, and to settle the difficulties with his farmers, he spent days and weeks on the estate and even at home sacrificed to this property many a precious hour which might have been devoted to more important tasks, until finally, after his taste for experience as an agriculturist had been satisfied, he lost all desire to be a landholder and in 1803 was glad to retire from the "mysterious field."

Extensive as was the practical activity just described, it was far surpassed by that in the field of science. It is here primarily a question of the natural sciences, for which he continued to nourish a secret preference, as he had said of chemistry, while a student at Strasburg. Botany, zoölogy, comparative anatomy, physics, chemistry, and astronomy occupied him continually. His essay on a collection of diseased ivory and his plan for a long poem on nature, which belong to this period, give one an approximate idea what a wide range of subjects, from the most special to the most general, engaged his attention. The lion's share of his scientific research, however, was in connection with his theory of colours. In his *Optische Beiträge* (1791 and 1792) he had called in question Newton's theory of light, but his views had not been accepted by specialists. So it was incumbent on him to renew the attack on a broader basis and, at the same time, to set forth his own theory which he had thus far held back. To this end he made a

long series of experiments, collected a large number of observations, and searched through all the literature on the theory of colours, going back even to Greek antiquity in order to gain material for his new theory from the testimony of older investigators. Being constantly urged by Schiller, whom he had greatly interested in his theory, he began with the new century to sift and digest the vast material. In 1806 he had proceeded so far with his work that the first part, the didactic portion, was altogether finished, and the remaining two parts, the polemical and the historical, were outlined. The historical part promised to develop into a history of the sciences on a grand scale (this was also Schlegel's opinion), indeed, of intellectual development in general. When the whole work, profusely illustrated with plates, was finally published (in 1810) it comprised two volumes with a total of almost fifteen hundred printed pages.

With the natural sciences he was forced as a matter of course to take up the study of the philosophy of nature. At that time natural science was on the one hand devoting itself more and more to accurate special investigation, and had on the other hand turned more and more to the deepest and ultimate relations of things, thus transforming itself into the philosophy of nature. Jena was the university where this transformation was taking place in the most decided form, under the leadership of the young and highly gifted philosopher Schelling. Goethe had always inclined toward the philosophy of nature, and as Schelling's view of nature followed the same lines as his own pantheistic conception, he soon became closely associated with the young philosopher ("I am decidedly drawn to your teaching," he had written to Schelling), and had many lively discussions with him about his *Einleitung zur Naturphilosophie*. A poem which originated at that time, *Weltseele*, as he later called it, to agree with the title of a work by Schelling, is a small poetical monument of those days. The poem on nature, which he planned, but did not write, would probably have been such a monument on a grand scale.

With scarcely less energy and passion, though with a more moderate amount of time than he devoted to the natural sciences, Goethe cultivated the theory of art during this period. German art was for the time being leading a languid and shallow existence. Both in theory and in practice men were feeling their way about in the dark. Winckelmann was profound and he divined correct principles, but he lacked a clear grasp of them. Lessing was clear-headed and exceedingly clever, but one-sided. Both were misunderstood oftener than not. Most men were satisfied with the cant of a shallow rapturous esthetics, the aftermath of Mengs and Batteux, or with a hazy naturalism, into which had entered the new ingredient of revelry in romantic sentiment. Goethe was perfectly justified in writing to Schiller, after his return from Switzerland (November 25, 1797): "Such driveling on the principles of art, as is now the fashion, has doubtless never before been known in the history of the world." In common with Meyer he sought to institute a reformation in the theory and practice of art. What he attempted in the way of prize competitions and art exhibitions we have already heard. Here his active interest in the theory of art comes into consideration. In order to carry out his purposes he established a periodical of his own to which he gave the title *Propyläen*. When the periodical suspended publication after a period of two years, on account of the small number of people interested in it, Goethe continued his efforts in the *Jenaer Literaturzeitung*, writing some of the articles himself and leaving others to Meyer's pen.

Critics have often made light of Goethe's efforts to reform German art, calling them futile, and have looked upon his failure as a blessing, because, as they assert, he tried to force German art into the mold of the classicists, and sought, by means of the noble, reposeful line of beauty of Winckelmann's ideal, which degenerated into effeminacy and suavity, to eliminate from art all that is characteristic, individual, and national.

That the immediate success of Goethe's efforts was very

meagre is true. This was due to the unpreparedness of the public and to the tendency of the times. He might have been able gradually to educate the public, artists as well as art-lovers, but the tendency of the age he could not have changed, even if his intellectual power had been greater than it was.

The dominant note of the times was religious and patriotic under the vague, symbolic garb of the Middle Ages. Goethe had no objections to the religious and national elements in themselves; he desired only that religion should not descend to mysticism, and that national enthusiasm should not exclude general humanity, that is to say, should not be patriotism in the bad sense. Furthermore, he never would have dreamed of trying to substitute Greek character for German, by making the Germans imitators of the Greeks, and thus robbing them of their individuality. Such a thing would have been impossible for a disciple of Herder. What he desired was, rather, the influence of Greek art on German artists for the sake of elevating their individuality; he desired that every one should experience this influence as he himself had experienced it, and as the artists of the Renaissance had experienced it. German artists were to learn from the Greeks how to bring forth their creations with a consciousness of freer life and higher existence, with ease, grace, and, we may add, perfect technique, but out of their own individuality. "Let every man be a Greek after his own fashion, but let him be a Greek!" was the apt form in which he later laid down his artistic confession of faith.

Herein is also expressed the importance of the characteristic,[55] which he emphasised again and again, even in the period (1788 to 1810) which is considered the culmination of his classicism, his worship of beauty of form. During this period he never ceased to grow enthusiastic, even enraptured, over many works of art whose chief merit in the eyes of critics was the fact that they portrayed the characteristic. In Düsseldorf, in 1792, he took sides against those who refused to give the Dutch a place beside the

Italian artists; in 1797 he complained about the general misunderstanding of the conception of beauty and divine repose, and praised the esthetician Hirt for having said that the characteristic and the passionate are proper subjects for art (letter to Meyer, July 14, 1797). In 1799, in *Der Sammler und die Seinigen*, he gave the portrayers of the characteristic the highest rank among artists. In 1803, in passing judgment upon the works sent to the art exhibition, he and Meyer expressed their delight that the demand for characteristic representation seemed again to be making itself more generally felt. The same year he declared that it is always a sign of a miserable state of affairs when form is made to supply everything. In 1805 he admired Peter Vischer's *Erzbischof Ernst* in the Magdeburg cathedral; in 1807 he agreed with an address by Schelling, which is an emphatic protest against the "spiritless imitation of beautiful forms," and against art that is "pampered and characterless" and "weakly ideal"; in 1808 he became enthusiastic over mythologico-Christian drawings by Albrecht Dürer[56]; and in 1805 he intended to offer for the following year a prize for the best picture of a haggling market-woman in the style of Rubens, in order to encourage artists, instead of painting rapturous figures on a gold ground, to choose their subjects from sturdy, robust life. How independent his view was, and how far it went beyond Winckelmann and Lessing, is shown by his statement that Hirt had forgotten that it took Lessing's and Winckelmann's, as well as his own, enunciations, combined with those of several other critics, to establish the limitations of art (letter to Schiller, July 5, 1797).

To his mind there was no contradiction between the characteristic and the beautiful, and could be none.[57] He held that the characteristic is a necessary element of the beautiful. According to his conception, the beautiful is nothing but an embodiment of the true in a form agreeable to the senses. At the same time nothing is true which is not characteristic. The mere copying of the real, however, was not enough to satisfy his idea of the true and the char-

acteristic; quite the contrary. In such copying the characteristic, and with it the true, is only too often obscured by all sorts of accidental things. Still less was he able to look upon every caricature, every hideous thing, and the very stiffness and angularity of an awkward technique, as something characteristic, in the sense of genuine art. That would have been making a virtue of the limitations of former centuries. Whoever would expect such things of him may consider him an enemy of the characteristic.

Goethe had too universal a mind and had been too long an observer of art not to have an understanding of the most varied modes of expression, provided these modes did justice to the thing to be expressed,—which, according to a view long held by him, was not the case in the monumental Gothic edifice—and provided they bore the stamp of an independent spirit. He has nowhere set this forth more beautifully than in the essay written for the *Propyläen* entitled, *Der Sammler und die Seinigen*. This article and the colloquy, *Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke*, will have their enduring importance, and it may be that in the very near future their influence will no longer be judged by their immediate results at the time of their publication.

The contributions which Goethe made to the theory of art cannot here be discussed in detail. Thus much, however, is certain, that every historian of art, even though he be opposed to Goethe's views, stands upon his shoulders.

"Quiet as my life appears when viewed from without it is carried away with ever increasing violence. The many threads of science, art, and business, which I took up in earlier days, are now running closer and closer together." We have seen the confirmation of this description which Goethe gave of his life in the year 1800. In his picture of the circling eddy, which caught him and carried him away from poetry, he forgot to mention the element of sociability. Goethe's was a sociable nature in the full sense of the word. He felt the need of explaining his views fully, if for no other reason, because his mind was cleared and stimulated by

speaking and because conversation often drew from him his most brilliant ideas. For such intercourse he needed, to be sure, people who stood on a comparatively equal plane with himself, people who could feel and understand what he said, or at least would listen to him devotedly. With his old friends in Weimar this was no longer the case. Wieland belonged to an outlived generation and Herder purposely assumed a hostile attitude toward Goethe. Goethe had hoped that the confirmation of his son August in June, 1802, at which he had asked Herder to officiate, would bring about a reconciliation. He was disappointed. Every conversation between them ended with a discord. When they met again, in the summer of 1803, Herder used "such an offensive trump" against Goethe that Goethe looked at him full of wonder and amazement and silently turned away. It was the last time that they ever saw each other. Herder died in December of that same year.

Knebel, although intellectually not far enough advanced for Goethe, had nevertheless remained an ardent admirer of his, and this, together with the interest which he took in the natural sciences, formed a strong bond of sympathy between them. When this odd original decided to marry "die Rudel," in June, 1797, he left Weimar and took up his residence in Ilmenau; in 1804 he moved to Jena, where Goethe frequently came in contact with him.

The places of Goethe's former intellectual companions in Weimar were taken by Schiller, who moved thither at the end of 1799, Heinrich Meyer, and Riemer, August's private tutor, a well educated young philologist, who, in 1803 came from the home of Wilhelm von Humboldt in Rome. He was a subaltern nature, but a good sounding-board, and a very useful assistant in Goethe's literary undertakings. One must think of him, the Silesian, and Meyer, the Swiss, as constantly in Goethe's entourage, which was almost daily increased in number by visitors from abroad, some of whom came to see the director of the theatre, others the lover of art, others the minister, the poet, or the naturalist, but most of them to pay their homage

to the famous great man. Among the visitors the most prominent were Madame de Staël, a woman of strong temperament and intellectual power, who spent over two months in Weimar in 1804, the gifted historian Johannes von Müller, the Berlin composer Zelter, and the Halle philologist Friedrich August Wolf. With the last two of these Goethe entered into close relations which became permanent.

The great student of antiquity was of more importance in Goethe's intellectual life, but Zelter meant more to him in his soul life. He was extraordinarily pleased with this robust, straightforward, self-made man. Zelter followed the two very different callings of master mason and musician, showing what a wonderful combination of strength and delicacy he was. With all his fine feeling he never became sentimental, and with all his education he never grew ethereal; he always kept his feet on solid ground. His language was usually noted for its refreshing, pithy plainness, being a faithful reflection of his warm-hearted, clear-cut nature. He showed a high appreciation of Goethe's life and labours, and wrote felicitous music to many of his songs. In his whole manner he impressed Goethe as a typical, efficient, full man, who seemed out of place in a period of effeminate sentimentality, such as that still in vogue at the beginning of the nineteenth century. "This thoroughly noble, excellent nature ought to have been born in a very rude age under popes and cardinals," wrote Goethe to Schiller in August, 1804, apparently thinking of the sturdy characters of the Renaissance, such as Benvenuto Cellini, whose autobiography he had just translated with intense human pleasure. Still higher praise is found in a letter of a year later to the Duke: "If excellence were to be lost out of the world, it could be restored again through him." Zelter may be characterised as the counterpart of Heinrich Meyer, except that he was more active, more original, and more versatile. This accounts for Goethe's entering into more cordial relations with him than with Meyer, which means a great deal. He became in a very real sense the confidant of Goethe's old age, and after their

friendship had stood the test of time the poet bestowed upon him the brotherly *Du*, he being the only man to receive this distinction in the second half of Goethe's long life. Goethe, on the other hand, proved to be for him, as for so many others, an incomparable soul-opener. After his first long visit in Weimar, in 1803, the life-hardened man of forty-five wrote to the poet: "So many years have I strenuously concealed my innermost thoughts from my nearest neighbours, and you at a distance have drawn back the veil."

Not so intimate, and yet lively, was the intercourse which Goethe kept up with his Jena friends already mentioned, and with a large number of men and women of Weimar. He increased the extent of his social obligations by frequently inviting to his home the better members of the theatrical company, and by founding in 1801 a club of men and women, which met at his home every Wednesday, and which bore the delicious fruit found in his *Gesellige Lieder*. This society, of which the Countess Henriette von Egloffstein was the most brilliant star, disbanded soon afterward, apparently because Goethe chose too high a pitch for the conversation. He then gathered about him once a week a select circle of women, to whom he delivered lectures, at first on art, later on natural science, especially on the theory of colours.

Nothing could give a clearer idea of the variety of his occupations and interests in those days than the entries in his diary. As they were more copious during his sojourns in Jena than in Weimar, where but scant time could be found even for these short notes, we have selected as typical a day in Jena. Under the date of May 7, 1799, we read:

"Morning, a short walk, then plan for the seventh letter of the *Sammler*. Toward 10 A.M., Professor Göttling concerning sugar from beets.[58] At 11, drive with Councillor Schiller toward Lobeda; then in Voigt's yard.* Observed the transit of Mercury. Evening with Councillor Schiller,

*Voigt was Goethe's colleague in the Privy Council. He was a most capable official and Goethe's chief support in all affairs of administration.

after despatching following letters to Weimar: to Professor Meyer, concerning art advertisement for Cotta in the *Allgemeine Zeitung;* to Demoiselle Vulpius, an announcement that the horses are to be sent over for the vacation; to Councillor Kirms, the assignment of the rôle of the first chasseur in *Wallensteins Lager;* inquiry concerning the Duke's return," etc.

Two days later we find the entries: "Letters to Privy Councillor Voigt, building of the Palace, memorandum concerning the stuccoer Hofmann; to Professor Meyer, revision returned, concerning the stuccoer Hofmann; to Councillor Kirms, new assignment of *Wallensteins Lager*," etc.

In such a press of social, official, artistic, and scientific interests, poetry had to take the part of Cinderella. Goethe complained of this. In November, 1800, he said: "Poor poetry is again in danger of being crowded very much into a corner by philosophers, naturalists, and their like. . . ." Still, it does not occur to him to change matters, clearly as he has been conscious since his Italian journey that his real calling is that of a poet. He allows himself to drift; he follows the instincts which impel him; always with a vague feeling that they will lead to something good for his chief calling, and that he can be certain his genius will summon him at the right time.

In the long space of ten years very little poetry was written; in fact, nothing was finished except a number of lyric poems and a few little plays for special festal occasions. New fragments were added to the heap of old ones; among them *Die natürliche Tochter* and *Achilleis*, which was to treat of the death of Achilles on a broad scale. If it had been completed it would have been an epic pendant to *Iphigenie*, an antique subject animated by a modern spirit. To the fate-doomed hero death finds its glorification in mild resignation, which makes him even more fully conscious of his creative power. What would have been the development of the whole poem we can of course only surmise; Goethe never advanced beyond the first canto, which in itself is a splendid fragment, radiant with the soft shimmer of profound emotion. He

finished at least the first part of *Faust;* of the second part, which he had flattered himself he could complete in the summer of 1799, he merely dashed off the *Helena* episode. Even the continuation of *Wilhelm Meister* was only "thought of."

Having taken this general survey of Goethe's life during the decade from 1797 to 1806, if we now go over the period as a chronicler, the first events we meet with which seem worthy of mention fall in the new century, which the people of Weimar, as elsewhere, looked upon as beginning with the year 1801. These events are not of a joyful nature. Goethe had entered upon the new century, which he greeted with the festal play, *Palăophron und Neoterpe*, in poor condition mentally and physically. Schiller saw some connection between his unhappy state of mind and his "miserable domestic relations," which weighed heavily upon him, and this explanation seems to be borne out by the circumstance that in 1800 Goethe remained in Jena over Christmas, away from Christiane and his eleven-year-old son. Although with Goethe a great depression of spirits was enough to produce serious disturbances in his state of health, in this case there was another cause which helped to bring about his illness. He had caught cold in the inhospitable palace where he usually had his lodging in Jena. Thus mental and physical influences overcame his power of resistance and at the beginning of January he was obliged to take to his bed. The illness assumed at once a very violent character; he lost consciousness for a long time, and his life seemed to be in extreme danger. During these days his old Weimar friends, the Duke and Frau von Stein, felt keenly how much they were attached to him. Frau von Stein wrote on the 12th of January to her son Fritz, at one time the poet's pupil: "I did not know that our former friend was still so dear to me, that a serious illness, with which he has now been nine days in bed, would affect me so deeply. . . . The Schillers and I have shed many tears over him during these days."

The Duke himself undertook in his energetic, forcible way the direction of all measures taken for the care and treatment of the patient, who was so dear to him. Not having sufficient confidence in the physicians of Weimar, he called in consultation Professor Stark of Jena, and to this interference Goethe ascribed the turn for the better, which came on the 13th. This dangerous illness removed from the hearts of many other people the feelings of aversion and estrangement toward the poet, which had been lodged there by a variety of happenings,—not always without Goethe's being to blame. The plainest, and for Goethe the most touching, example was that of Capellmeister Reichardt, who had been miserably treated in the *Xenien*.

Goethe's mother knew nothing of the illness until after the crisis was past and there was a sure prospect of recovery. She raised her hands to Heaven in gratitude that God had again "strengthened his stakes" and "lengthened his cords," and she lived in the blissful hope "that her Wolfgang would again with his beautiful brown eyes look happily upon God's creation." When she met the Duke two years later she thanked him sincerely for the care which he had taken of her son. She wrote to her son, repeating the conversation: "Then he replied, deeply moved, 'He did the same thing for me. For thirty years we have been walking together and sharing each other's burdens.' " The bond was one which might perhaps be loosened for a time, but could never be rent asunder.

Goethe was rather quickly out of bed, but his convalescence was very slow. A visit to Pyrmont in the summer failed to restore his former health. He was left with a very nervous irritability which at times during the next two years gave rise to painful situations. For example, in January, 1802, a review by Böttiger of the performance of Schlegel's *Ion*,[59] which was sent to Goethe for inspection before being published in Bertuch's *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, threw him into such a passion that he heaped the bitterest vituperations upon Böttiger and threatened Bertuch that, in case he did not by four o'clock in the after-

GOETHE AND FRITZ VON STEIN

(From the silhouette by von Klauer, reproduced from "Das Neunzehnte Jahrhundert in Bildnissen," by permission Berlin Photographic Co.)

noon declare his willingness to suppress the review, the whole matter would immediately be laid before the Duke and brought to a final settlement. Likewise this nervous disposition offers the only possible explanation of his attitude two months later toward a public celebration in honour of Schiller, which Kotzebue planned, it is true, solely as a demonstration against Goethe. Instead of preserving a dignified, reserved bearing, or kindly offering to support the undertaking, which would have been still better and would have deprived the occasion of its partisan tendency, beside protecting him from the appearance of jealousy, and even fear, he played into Kotzebue's hand by using his official authority and his personal influence to prevent the demonstration, thereby leaving an impression far more unfavourable to him than the holding of the celebration could ever have produced.

The state of excitement into which he was thrown the following year by conditions at the University of Jena was in itself justified, but at the same time gave evidence of abnormal irritability. Six of the most prominent and most active professors, the two Hufelands, Loder, Paulus, Schelling, and Schütz, beside the polyhistor Erich, accepted advantageous calls to other positions. The worst feature of the situation was the fact that with Schütz the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, of which he was the editor, was also to be moved and was to appear henceforth in Halle. Prussia had paid Schütz ten thousand thalers to move. This journal, which covered all specialties and had hundreds of collaborators, enjoyed an extraordinary influence in the whole learned world, and Goethe spoke of it, not without justification, as "world-famous." It supported the intellectual hegemony of Jena and at the same time, as has been previously mentioned, afforded the professors who contributed to it considerable financial returns, which made up for the smallness of their salaries. Hence the loss of the *Literaturzeitung* was sure to be a blow from which the University could not have recovered. Goethe, who saw the child of his heart thus threatened, developed a

feverish activity to ward off the blow. Immediately, in August, 1803, he took the necessary steps to establish a new literary journal in the place of the one leaving. In his excitement he had recourse to all the means which offered themselves, provided only they served his purpose, and it was to him a source of satisfaction that the very moment the old journal departed from Jena (January 1, 1804) the new one appeared in the same solid form as the old one. It was called *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, thus declaring itself to be the genuine continuation of the old one. The secondary matters of business connected with the editorship were looked after by the philologist Eichstädt, while Goethe himself was for several years the editor-in-chief. In this undertaking Goethe wasted an invaluable portion of his time.

Weighed down by the exhausting struggle for the preservation of the prosperity of Jena, the real success of which was still very doubtful at the end of the year 1803; fretted by doubts whether it was right for him so to divert his strength from his own labours; and dissatisfied with the state of his health, he fell during the gloomy days of December into a genuine Werther mood. To the announcement that Madame de Staël had arrived in Weimar and awaited him, he replied on the 20th of December; "She comes at a time which to me is the most annoying of the whole year; a time at which I understand very well why Henry III. should have sent for the Duke of Guise, merely because it was fatal weather, and a time at which I envy Herder when I hear that he is buried."

Soon after New Year's his tortured condition terminated in another illness, from which he only partially recovered, though he became more calm. He began to think of eternal things, so that temporal things appeared to him in their limited importance. The success of his labours for the University of Jena began to be more apparent, and his domestic relations also showed visible improvement. To this more agreeable atmosphere at home is to be ascribed the fact that during the year 1804 he remained in

Weimar more than at any other time since 1789, although the direction of the *Literaturzeitung* would have been far more convenient in Jena. But his poetic power seemed to be lamed. Whereas even in his most sterile years he had always been able to command his poetry for festal occasions, this year he was unable to produce anything in honour of the coming of the hereditary princess, the gracious and gifted Grand-Duchess Maria Paulowna. His place had to be taken by Schiller, who, although himself ill, quickly composed for the occasion the ingenious play, entitled *Die Huldigung der Künste*, which was produced on the 12th of November.

Und ſo geſchah's! Dem friedenreichen Klange
Bewegte ſich das Land, und ſegenbar
Ein friſches Glück erſchien; im Hochgeſange
Begrüßten wir das junge Fürſtenpaar.

. . . . . .

Da hör' ich ſchreckhaft mitternächt'ges Läuten,
Das dumpf und ſchwer die Trauertöne ſchwellt.
Iſt's möglich? Soll es unſern Freund bedeuten,
An den ſich jeder Wunſch geklammert hält? *

On the 9th of May, 1805, Goethe's noble friend had succumbed to his sufferings. The two had seen little of each other during the last months. Between January and March Goethe had suffered several serious relapses. Scarcely had he made some slight progress toward recovery when Schiller died. Goethe was prostrated with grief. "I thought I should lose my own life and now I lose a friend and in him the half of my existence" (letter to Zelter). These few words tell all. In order to bring

* And thus it proved. That peaceful signal, pealing,
The country swayed, and then appeared ere long
New joy, with blessings fraught; our loyal feeling
The princely pair did greet with lofty song.

. . . . . .

When hark! the midnight still is rudely broken
By dull and mournful notes of fun'ral knell.
Is 't he? Can this our dearest friend betoken,
For whom our hearts with fondest wishes swell?

his friend near to him in the spirit he decided to finish *Demetrius*, which Schiller had left a fragment. The attempt failed, as did also the plan to erect an imposing monument to the dead in a comprehensive, allegorical drama. It was only in the *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke* that he succeeded in painting on a great scale and with profound feeling a picture of his friend and his inspired work, and in sounding the mighty tones of his own and the whole nation's sorrow. Any further memorial to the dead would have been superfluous after this; it might have been more elaborate, but not more effective.

Goethe looked upon it as the intervention of a kindly disposed spirit that in June, while the wound was still very fresh and painful, Friedrich August Wolf came from Halle to pay him a visit of a fortnight. With him Goethe lost himself in the serene fields of Greek antiquity, and the antique, which more than once had been a refreshing fountain to him, proved again its invigorating, Lethean power. The effect of antiquity brought to life by the luminous, living words of Wolf, was strengthened by the young daughter who "vied with spring in all the charms of fresh youth."*

After this visit the mourning poet longed to be united again soon with Wolf. He decided to spend the period of his convalescence in Lauchstädt, where Wolf could reach him in two hours, and announced to him his going thither in these characteristic words: "On Wednesday, the 3rd of July, I arrive again in your neighbourhood, which seems to me like the balmy South." Then he visited Wolf in Halle, went with him on a fortnight's journey to the Harz, and again returned for several weeks to Lauchstädt, where he often had Wolf as his guest. At the close of his sojourn (September 5th) he wrote to Wolf: "The great good that you have done me will ever remain fresh in my memory, and for the patience which you can show toward a sick man who is barely recovering I shall remain eternally grateful to you."

*The daughter referred to is Wolf's daughter Wilhelmine, who accompanied him on this visit. Cf. *Annalen, 1805*.—C.

The year came to an end with serious forebodings. Thuringia was filling up with Prussian soldiers. During the first months of the next year (1806) the movements of troops became more numerous. Weimar was at times full of soldiers, and still the people lived on thoughtlessly day by day. Thus far things had remained quiet in northern Germany; why not longer? Goethe was not undisturbed, but the situation was not yet so threatening as to make him hesitate to go to Karlsbad at the end of June to take the baths, which the physicians had urgently recommended to him. He spent the whole of July there and the treatment was a marked success. After five years of more or less serious illness he regained his perfect health, and with it his humour, his equanimity, his calm, sovereign command of circumstances. It was just in the nick of time.

XI

THE WAR

Rise of Napoleon—Prussia's attitude toward France—The Rhenish Confederation—Prussia declares war on France—Downfall of the Holy Roman Empire—Weimar drawn into the war—Battle of Jena—French soldiers in Goethe's house—Goethe's plea for the University—Napoleon and Duchess Luise—Karl August retires from Prussian service—Peace—Goethe's legal marriage—Work of rehabilitation—The Duke's return.

WAR had produced tremendous upheavals in Europe during the last ten years. The youthful general, Napoleon Bonaparte, had turned the forces of his people, which had been wearing each other out in the revolution, against their foreign foes and had won victory after victory. In vain did Europe, as far east as the Ural and the Bosporus, rise in arms against him. Disunion and inferior leadership robbed the allies of the permanent success which might have been expected of their superiority in numbers. In the year 1805 the three great powers, Austria, Russia, and England, had again united for a decisive campaign against France, of which General and Consul Bonaparte had meanwhile made himself Emperor. Again victory perched upon the banners of the French. French troops occupied the ancient city of the emperors on the Danube, and after the defeat at Austerlitz (December 2nd) the emperors of the east bowed to the emperor of the west. During all these campaigns, which had gradually brought Italy, Holland, Switzerland, and the left bank of the Rhine either into the possession or under the suzerainty of the French, Prussia had remained a quiet spectator. Like most of the German states, she had found

it to her advantage to be on a peaceful footing with France. For her friendly neutrality she, as well as Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, and other states, had received considerable additions to her possessions at the expense of the ecclesiastical foundations and the free, imperial cities, and had in this way been richly compensated for her loss on the left bank of the Rhine. In the course of the last war the neutrality of the South and West German states had transformed itself into a brotherhood in arms, which again brought them noteworthy reward. At the beginning of the war Prussia had been seriously angered by the injury to her Ansbach territory, and had already sent her regiments through Thuringia as far as Bayreuth; but before she took any further vigorous steps peace was declared, and her neutrality seemed again to be rewarded when she received Hanover as a gift in return for small cessions of territory. Finally it dawned upon the authoritative circles in Prussia that Napoleon wished only to deceive them and hold them off in order to crush them in their isolation and force them under his dominion. This danger became pressing in the summer of 1806, when Napoleon formed of the South and West German states a Rhenish Confederation under his protectorate, and, in spite of the declaration of peace, left his army in South Germany. Then Prussia saw the threatening danger and decided upon war. On the 9th of August the mobilisation of troops was ordered.

The Electorate of Saxony and the Thuringian states had followed the neutral policy of Prussia and enjoyed the same quiet. Goethe was not much in favour of this policy. There was no doubt in his mind that if all the German states would unite and with their combined forces would carry on the war energetically, they would be sure to win the victory over their revolutionary foe. With this in mind he had directed an appeal to the nation, in *Hermann und Dorothea*, which in the nature of the case failed to accomplish anything. Rather than wear one's self out in a kind of patriotism which, with the desultoriness and weakness

of the German estates, was to no purpose, it seemed wiser to make sure of peace and to employ it in the solution of the highest problems of civilisation. Furthermore, the hope of success in a conflict with the demonic, all-conquering genius of Napoleon had been constantly waning. Recognising that they could not change matters, they let them take their course.

While Goethe was in Karlsbad the situation became more and more critical. This, however, did not disturb his good humour to any great extent, except that it drove him away somewhat earlier than he had planned. He left the baths on the 4th of August. On the 6th he received in Hof the news of the formation of the Rhenish Confederation, which sealed the downfall of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The vanishing of this phantom structure, concerning which, thirty years before, he had expressed his astonishment that it still held together, caused him no excitement. On the 7th he wrote in his diary the ironical words: "Quarrel of the servant and the coachman on the driver's seat, which aroused our passion more than the disruption of the Roman Empire."

The further consequences of the foundation of the Rhenish Confederation occupied him more seriously. War between France and Prussia was now unavoidable and would necessarily draw Weimar into its train. There could be no alternative for Karl August, as a patriot, as a Prussian general, as a nephew of the Prussian commander-in-chief, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, and as the prince of a country which lay entirely within the sphere of Prussian influence. Goethe looked forward to this war with no hope. On the 24th of September, in the headquarters at Niederrossla, he held "a pregnant conversation" with the Duke, which certainly had reference solely to the steps to be taken in case of misfortune. It is probable that he at that time advised the Duke, in case they should suffer defeat, not to cling to Prussia with an exaggerated conception of loyalty, but to dissolve the alliance with honour, and thus to turn aside the devastating thunderbolt from his country

and his house. After the unfortunate battle near Saalfeld (October 10th), when it became certain that the decisive struggle between the opposing forces would take place in the neighbourhood of Weimar, the whole Court, with the exception of Duchess Luise, fled. Many other people fled also. Goethe remained at his post and did not even think of taking his papers and art treasures to a place of safety.

On the morning of the 14th the thunder of cannon at the battle of Jena was heard in Weimar. In the afternoon the state of affairs was known by the retreat of the Prussians through the city at top speed. Soon afterward French troops occupied the city and went into quarters, tired, hungry, and eager for pillage. Goethe's house received sixteen Alsatian Hussars, who conducted themselves reasonably well. In the night two tirailleurs broke in, asked for the man of the house, compelled him to drink with them, and later, when to all appearances everybody was asleep, forced their way into his bedroom and threatened to take his life,—probably in order to extort money and valuables from him. At this moment of danger Christiane called to her aid one of the many men of Weimar who had sought refuge in the house, and together they put the marauders out of the room. In the morning Marshal Ney came to the house for a few hours and left Goethe a guard for his protection. The Marshal was superseded by General Victor and Marshals Lannes and Augereau. Victor and Augereau issued special orders for Goethe's protection, Augereau characterising Goethe as an *homme recommandable dans toutes les acceptions du mot.* On the morning of the 17th these officers left the house, the city having meanwhile received as its commandant General Jentzel, a native of the Palatinate, who had been a student at Jena and was an admirer of Goethe. Soon after his arrival he directed the following lines to Goethe: "The Adjutant General of the Imperial Staff begs Privy Councillor Goethe to rid his mind of all fear. At the request of Marshal Lannes, and out of consideration for the great Goethe, the undersigned commandant of the city of Weimar will take every pre-

caution to assure the safety of Herr Goethe and his house." Jentzel kept his promise faithfully. On the 18th he quartered in Goethe's house a most agreeable enemy in the person of M. Denon, inspector general of the arts and the museum of Paris, with whom Goethe had formed a friendship in Italy. During his stay of a few days he had medallions made of Goethe's and Wieland's heads.

In this way Goethe fared very well after the first fright, but the majority of his friends and acquaintances were less favoured. They had a great deal to suffer from the plunderings and brutalities of the victors. Goethe kept them from want, so far as he was able, though he himself was heavily enough burdened with the quartering of forty men in his house. A note, which he wrote to Meyer, runs: "Tell me, my dear friend, in what way I can be of service to you. Coat, waistcoat, shirt, etc., will be gladly sent. Perhaps you need some victuals?"

His Jena friends caused him great anxiety, for the city had suffered terribly. After he had learned their fate he sought to aid each one by means of direct or indirect support, by encouragement and advice. In addition he made an earnest appeal for the University to Denon, who had journeyed on to the Emperor's headquarters, and sought to gain Denon's personal interest by laying emphasis upon the fact that with the University he would lose the results of thirty years' personal labour; for "*les institutions de Jéna étaient en partie mon ouvrage.*" The fate of Jena and, one may say, Goethe's own fate was closely bound up with that of the duchy.

The French Emperor was full of wrath at Karl August. "Where is the Duke?" he thundered at the Duchess, as he entered the Palace. "At the post where duty calls him," she replied with dignity and repose. The Emperor rushed angrily to his room. In an impressive conversation on the following day the Duchess described to the Emperor the situation of her husband and her country, and received from him the declaration: "You have saved your husband. I pardon him, but only for your sake."

GOETHE'S GARDEN HOUSE
(From Könnecke's *Bilderatlas*)

Karl August, who had retired with his corps to the border, left in the hands of the King the decision as to whether or not he might now withdraw from the Prussian service with honour. He was granted a dismissal in very courteous form, and negotiations for peace were soon taken up. An agreement as to the terms was reached on the 15th of December. Weimar was obliged to enter the Rhenish Confederation, to pledge military service when called upon, and to pay a contribution of two million two hundred thousand francs,—an enormous sum for the country. When Karl August with his German and paternal sentiments was forced to accept such conditions his heart bled.

Distress and danger often lead in a single moment to determinations which would otherwise have been postponed for years. This was true in Goethe's case. He had long considered the idea of changing his conscience marriage with Christiane into a form recognised by society as legitimate. While consideration for August was in itself enough to urge him to take such a step, he was still more strongly influenced by gratitude toward Christiane, who during the past years had taken care of him with great watchfulness and devotion. In August, 1805, after his last tedious illness, he had thanked her with special warmth for her love and loyalty, and had added: "May it go well with thee in return! I hope, so long as I live, to do all that in me lies to that end." The first thing that he might have thought of to help her was a civil marriage. Nevertheless he allowed more than a year to pass by without taking any steps in that direction. One can imagine his feelings and how hard it was for him to overcome his hesitation; but it had to be overcome. When cannon balls flew over his roof, the light of burning houses shone into his room, and brutal soldiers threatened his life, he all at once cast his hesitation aside and announced to Councillor of the Consistory Günther his determination to "recognise fully and legally as his own the wife who had passed through these hours of trial with him." The ceremony was performed

on the 19th of October, but it is worthy of note that he had the wedding rings dated the 14th. Thus Christiane became his recognised wife and from that time forth not only did he himself show her the honours belonging to her position, he also insisted that others do the same. To be sure, Christiane, knowing well that she was his inferior in social and intellectual culture, made his task easy for him by remaining modestly in the background.

Hardly had the storm of war passed over Weimar when Goethe took up with energy the continuation of his labours, and sought to restore the regular routine of the institutions under his care, particularly the University of Jena, the Institute of Drawing, and the Theatre of Weimar. The University opened its lectures on the 3rd of November, and though personal and material conditions were most miserable, it soon recovered from the blow. The misfortune of the University of Halle, which was abolished by Napoleon, became Jena's good fortune, as many of the students moved from Halle to Jena. The Institute of Drawing began instruction on the 5th of November under the direction of Meyer. The former director, Kraus, a good old man, in whom Goethe had for more than thirty years had a noble friend and helper, had died of mistreatment at the hands of French soldiers.

Little as seemed to be the desire for a theatre in Weimar, performances were resumed on the second Christmas holiday. During all this time the Duke had still remained away from home. After he was relieved of his command he stayed in Berlin, in order, after the signing of the treaty of peace, to proceed from there to Warsaw to pay his homage to the French Emperor, which he ought to have done long before. But this was not to be, and at the end of January, after an absence of four fateful months, he returned to his own country.

XII

DIE WAHLVERWANDTSCHAFTEN

Death of Duchess Amalia—Goethe takes the cure at Karlsbad—Return of Maria Paulowna to Weimar—Goethe goes to Jena for sake of quiet—Minna Herzlieb—Goethe's relation to her—Zacharias Werner and Goethe's sonnets—*Epoche*—Origin and composition of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*—Goethe writes in retirement—Elements of experience and scientific theory in the framework of the novel—Analysis of the first part: Eduard and Charlotte—The Captain—Theory of elective affinities—Ottilie—New affinities—Mittler and his encomium on marriage—The Count and the Baroness—The Captain and Charlotte—Eduard and Ottilie—Fireworks at the lakeside—Eduard's departure—Ottilie's solitariness—Mittler's attempt to bring about a reconciliation between Eduard and Charlotte—Eduard goes away to the war—Analysis of the second part: Retardations—Ottilie's diary—The architect—Luciane's visit—The boarding-school master—Charlotte gives birth to a son—Ottilie under the control of natural forces—Eduard's return—Love scene by the lake—The child drowned—Talk of a divorce—Ottilie awakes to her sinfulness and renounces her love—She sets out for the boarding-school to become a teacher—Eduard meets her at the inn—She returns to the castle—She denies herself food and drink—Mittler's sermon on the sixth commandment—Ottilie dies of starvation—Miraculous power of her corpse—Eduard's death—Mystical explanation of Ottilie's remaining at the castle—Inconsistencies in her conduct—The idea of the novel—Criticism of the ending—The art of narration in the novel—The presageful element—The characters—Harmony between events and nature—Style—The ethics of the novel—The sanctity of marriage—Occasion for such a sermon—Silvie von Ziegesar—The plea for resignation.

THE duchy was at peace, but felt the effects of war. It had heavy burdens to bear in the way of contributions and frequent quarterings of soldiers, and, besides, its battalion of chasseurs had to leave home to help fight the battles of the French Emperor. The

spirit of the country was depressed. The death of Duchess Amalia, on the 10th of April, 1807, came as a further blow. The fears, anxieties, and cares during the months of the war, together with the painfulness of the new Napoleonic vassalage, had broken the great woman's power of resistance. She could not forget that she was the niece of Frederick the Great and a Brunswick princess. Goethe wrote of her: "To the sorrow of all, and to my special grief, she was called away from her earthly fatherland, which seemed to her shaken to its deepest foundation, yea destroyed." A memorial, full of warmth and insight, which he dedicated to her, was read from all the chancels of the country.

Goethe sought to overcome the accumulation of obnoxious experiences and emotions by working harder and by keeping up a lively social intercourse. In this way he used up a good portion of the strength which he had regained during the previous year, so that he soon felt a strong desire to take the baths again at Karlsbad. He set out in the middle of May. At the first halting-place, in Jena, he began the long planned continuation of *Wilhelm Meister*, which had become an urgent necessity. This was to transport him and his thoughts to a world entirely different from that actually surrounding him. On his arrival in Karlsbad he expressed his keen delight that he was no longer everywhere confronted by the hideous features of the war-fury. To his wife he wrote: "I cannot express to thee how happy we [Riemer and he] feel since we have been but these few hours in a peaceful country, among good people, and enjoying the comforts of life in our own way. In spirit I am already almost entirely cured, and the body, I hope, will soon follow." This hope was realised; and as he also made good progress with his writing, and the society was exceptionally agreeable and interesting, he prolonged the refreshing sojourn from week to week until well on into the fourth month, when he finally, after some hesitation, made up his mind to return home (September 6th).

Meanwhile the courage of the people of Weimar had been restored. Peace had been concluded with Prussia,

the Weimar chasseurs had been permitted to come home from the entrenchments around Colberg, and finally the Hereditary Princess, Maria Paulowna, who had remained away longest on account of the French occupation, returned to the Palace on the Ilm. Goethe opened the winter season at the Theatre with a *Vorspiel* on the "happy reunion of the Ducal Family."

With the re-establishment of general quiet began the many demands and temptations which before the war had so often lured the poet aside from his most important tasks. For this reason he betook himself to Jena on the 11th of November, in order that he might work undisturbed. He found there what he had hoped for, and yet he was not happy. He was avoiding society but could not get along without it. "It is so quiet here that it seems too quiet, even for me, who have come over here for the sake of quiet," he confessed to Minister von Voigt. "The long evenings here are almost unendurable," he complained to Frau von Stein. To be sure, the former Jena, with its superabundance of active, intellectual people, was no more. "I am sitting here upon the ruins of Jena," is the way he once expressed himself on the subject during those days; but there were still some families there who were very dear to him, and were well able to help him while away the long evenings.

There were the Knebels and the family of the bookseller Frommann, who had resided in Jena since 1798. Frommann himself was serious and genuine, and a man of liberal education; his wife was amiable and a woman of importance; their charming adopted daughter, Minna Herzlieb,[60] was a slender, dreamy maiden, charming as a rose. Goethe had often before enjoyed himself in their home, and found it still as attractive a place as ever at the beginning of this sojourn in Jena. Suddenly he began, however, to show in his bearing a striking reserve, accompanied by the complaints which we have just heard. After this had continued about a fortnight he called on the family more frequently than ever before and his manner betrayed

nothing but joy and contentment. How is this remarkable change in his conduct to be explained? In no other way than by the power which Minna's personality exerted over him. She had early stolen herself into his heart, and as she grew in years, beauty, attractiveness, and tenderness, his affection for her grew also.[61] In 1813 Goethe confessed to Zelter: "I began to love her as a child of eight years, and in her sixteenth year I loved her more than was just." Goethe was mistaken as to her age. She was about ten years old when he made her acquaintance, and eighteen when his love for her reached the culminating point. "I loved her more than was just." This means more than was good for his peace of mind, and perhaps for hers as well. In anticipation of the approaching danger he "wisely sought to put her out of his mind." During that year he had avoided Jena almost altogether. In November, when circumstances made it necessary for him to go there, the growing intimacy of the first few days revealed to him what a dangerous thing it would be for him to be thrown frequently into Minna's society, and he reduced his visits at the Frommanns' to the minimum number in keeping with ordinary politeness. The more he suffered the tortures of longing, the more lazily the evenings dragged along, even when, to avoid being left alone, he went to pay a visit in the entertaining home of the Knebels, or whiled away the time with his congenial friend Major von Henderich.

Finally an incident occurred which frustrated his practiced caution. On the evening of December 1st* Zacharias Werner arrived. Werner had been made famous by his dramas, *Die Söhne des Tals*, and *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee*, and especially by *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft*. He was a homely faun, but a man of genius, full of fire, an inspirer of others, and an unqualified admirer of Goethe, whom he had followed to Jena. On the 3rd of December Goethe introduced him to the Frommanns. His sprightly nature soon had the company engaged in a

*The date is taken from *SGG.*, xiv, 307.

lively poetical activity. He himself composed occasional lyrics, in the then popular form of sonnets, in which he paid his homage to the ladies of the house. Goethe, Riemer, Knebel, and every other member of the circle who could make verses, resolved not to be outdone, and so a regular war of sonnetists broke out. The daily meetings, which at first may have been due more to Werner's efforts than to Goethe's, revived in Goethe's heart all his affection for Minna, and the poetic pastime soon developed into a passion in bitter earnest.

Schau, Liebchen, hin! Wie geht's dem Feuerwerker?
Drauf ausgelernt, wie man nach Maßen wettert,
Irrgänglich-klug miniert er seine Grüfte;

Allein die Macht des Elements ist stärker,
Und eh' er sich's versieht, geht er zerschmettert
Mit allen seinen Künsten in die Lüfte.*

On the 14th of December he wrote to Meyer: "The presence of the 'son of the valley' has ushered in a very peculiar epoch." The explanation of these words is found in the sonnet *Epoche:*

Mit Flammenschrift war innigst eingeschrieben
Petrarcas Brust vor allen andern Tagen
Karfreitag. Ebenso, ich darf's wohl sagen,
Ist mir Advent von achtzehnhundertsieben.

Ich fing nicht an, ich fuhr nur fort zu lieben
Sie, die ich früh im Herzen schon getragen,
Dann wieder weislich aus dem Sinn geschlagen,
Der ich nun wieder bin ans Herz getrieben.

Petrarcas Liebe, die unendlich hohe,
War leider unbelohnt und gar zu traurig,
Ein Herzensweh, ein ewiger Karfreitag;

* See, love, how fares the pyrotechnist later?
Well taught to make at will the roar of thunder,
His mines he loads in manner wrong, yet clever;

But lo! the mighty element is greater,
And ere he is aware, the costly blunder
To atoms blows his work and him for ever.

Doch ſtets erſcheine fort und fort die frohe,
Süß, unter Palmenjubel, wonneſchaurig,
Der Herrin Ankunft mir, ein ew'ger Maitag.*

Fortunately, pressure of affairs interrupted the continuation of the dangerous "epoch." Goethe was obliged to return to Weimar on the 18th, and the moment he departed from before the face of his beloved he regained his self-control. Minna had made it comparatively easy for him by receiving his homage with subdued pleasure.† She may have considered his attentions nothing more than a manifestation of fatherly affection, enhanced by poetic fancy. Besides, her heart was protected against temptation by a youthful love. In May of the following year she left Jena for four years, thus removing all possibility of even a playful continuation of the wooing. While in real life the love-fire of Advent, 1807, quickly died down and continued to glow only beneath its ashes, in literature it left behind traces of enduring brilliancy. In addition to producing a collection of glorious sonnets it breathed the breath of life into a great work of deep significance.

The work is question is *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*.[62] The problem of this novel had doubtless occupied Goethe for a long time, but it did not assume literary form until he had made certain observations in his own experience

* In Petrarch's heart, all other days above,
In flaming letters of profound impression
Good Friday burned. This then is my confession,
That Advent will to me as sacred prove.

'T is not that her I now begin to love;
Long since she of my heart did take possession.
'T is but that love revived, which self-repression
Once wisely from my burning bosom drove.

The love of Petrarch, infinitely tender,
Alas! was unrequited and most sad,
One long heart-throb, one endless, drear Good Friday!

But may my Mistress' Advent joy engender,
Her jubilee of palms, serenely glad,
The year convert into an endless May Day.

† *Cf.* Erich Schmidt, *Spielhagen-Album*, Leipsic, 1899, p. 5 *ff.*

as a husband. The day when the work came into being, even the hour, can be determined with a reasonable degree of certainty. It was originally intended to form a part of the *Wanderjahre*. Goethe purposed to treat symbolically the one great fundamental motive of the *Wanderjahre*, resignation, in a series of short stories and fairy tales. In the summer of the year which we are now considering he had made a beginning, and had dashed off *Die neue Melusine*, *Die pilgernde Törin*, *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*, and *Die gefährliche Wette*,—the last as a mere episode for entertainment. In August he had laid the work aside. When he went to Jena in November for a period of undisturbed work it was not his plan to take up the *Wanderjahre* again; the only thing to which he wished to devote himself, apart from his *Farbenlehre*, was the writing of *Pandora*, which he had meanwhile outlined. We find him diligently at work, too; but he has by no means finished when we are surprised by the entry in his diary, on the 9th of December: "Novelettes for *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*." These are immediately lost sight of, however, and are not heard of again till the 11th of April, 1808, when we meet them in the following form: "Worked on outlines for the short stories (fairy-tales and novelettes), especially *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* and *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren*." From this we may assume that on the morning of the 9th of December, while he lay late in bed (an item not forgotten in the entry in his diary), turning over in his mind the immediate impressions of the last evenings, the main features of the plot of the novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* suggested themselves vividly to his fancy.[63] After the first conception he lets the plot go through the process of maturing in his mind. This process takes place rapidly. On the 1st of May of the new year there is still nothing on paper but a mere outline, and yet he is able to narrate to Meyer the first half of the story. The real writing begins the first of June in Karlsbad and proceeds so smoothly that, in spite of long pauses, it is finished on the 30th of July.

So long as one of Goethe's manuscripts lay in his desk he

did not cease to work at it. He began again to think out the story, and found many gaps in it. At that moment he was not in a position to fill them in; he must first have time for rumination. Thus the finished, yet unfinished, work was left lying for over eight months. In April, 1809, he took it in hand again seriously; and, though the first redaction had exceeded the limits which had to be observed for a novelette to be interwoven in the *Wanderjahre*, this is far more the case with the second redaction. It swelled and swelled. But he could not well wait till the *Wanderjahre* should see the light of the world, at some indefinite time in the future. He desired to be rid of the subject, in order through it to liberate himself from his own pain. So he concentrated all his power upon the work in the summer and, in order to subject himself to pressure from without, allowed Cotta, his publisher, to announce it for Michaelmas. Four months he lived in isolation in Jena and worked at the novel. He worked under passionate excitement, and nobody was allowed to disturb him. Urgently and repeatedly he begged his wife not to visit him herself or let any other visitors come to him. Even August, who had come home after a year and a half at the University of Heidelberg, was not permitted to go to him. Only when the last proof sheet was corrected, on the 4th of October, did he return to his family and to Weimar society.

The effect which he had expected the completion of the novel to have upon himself was not wholly realised, for the simple reason that he wished still further to cherish the sweet sadness of his alleviated pain. "Nobody will fail to recognise in this novel a deep, passionate wound, which in healing avoids closing,—a heart which fears recovery," is his own confession in the *Annalen*. We hear the soft echoes of this sadness in a conversation of the year 1815. On a journey from Karlsruhe to Heidelberg, in the evening, after the stars had come out, Goethe was carried away by his fancy and talked to Sulpiz Boisserée, who had no idea of the real foundation of the novel, of his relation to Ottilie. He told his young friend how much

he had loved her and how she had made him unhappy. "At last he became almost enigmatically prophetic in his utterances."

About Goethe's experiences with Minna Herzlieb as a centre were crystallised many other experiences, dreams, and reflections. On his visit to the Odilienberg, when a student at Strasburg, he had painted to himself a fancy picture of St. Ottilia, which had impressed itself deeply upon his mind and which now seemed to blend with Minna. Elective affinity had once drawn him and Frau von Stein to one another. In the philosophy of nature and in natural science magnetism had been raised to a central force, by which men sought to explain the moral and intellectual attraction in the lives of human beings. In the winter of 1805–1806 Goethe had himself delivered lectures on galvanism. All these elements combined to form the peculiar framework of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*.

Baron Eduard had in his youth loved the beautiful, gentle, clever Charlotte. Like him she descended from a noble family. But she possessed no property, and his parents succeeded in persuading him to forsake Charlotte and marry a rich woman whom he did not love. Charlotte also yielded to the pressure of circumstances and the desires of her parents, and gave her hand to a well-to-do man, whom she respected, but for whom she had no special affection. Meanwhile about sixteen or seventeen years had passed, and through the death of their wedded companions both had again become free. Eduard's wife had soon died; Charlotte's husband only a year ago, just at the time when Eduard was returning from extensive travels. The old youthful love awakens in Eduard's heart and he offers his hand to Charlotte. She hesitates to accept. She now considers herself too old for him. Her beauty has faded, and she believes that Eduard would be happier with a younger wife. So she introduces him to her beautiful niece, of whom she is very fond, and to whom she has been a foster-mother since the death of the girl's own

mother. The niece making no impression upon Eduard, he again urges his suit upon Charlotte and she now consents to marry him.

After the wedding he retires with her to his country-seat, and there in the early spring we find Eduard cheerfully engaged in grafting trees in the garden, while Charlotte is occupied with the more important work of transforming the park. The difference in the nature and importance of their occupations is symbolic. Although the honeymoon is scarcely past, Charlotte does not seem to occupy Eduard's soul entirely. He has evidently been deceived as to his feelings. What he had considered warm love was more a romantic conception of chivalrous loyalty and a certain stubbornness, such as we observe in a child, which must get at any price what it has set its heart upon.

As yet he is unconscious of this, but we see the first symptom of it when he proposes to Charlotte that she invite his friend the Captain to their castle. He says, to be sure, that it is only for the sake of the Captain, who longs for some congenial occupation, which can very well be offered him on their estate. But we have a feeling that a motive lying deeper in Eduard's heart is his longing for society. Charlotte, who knows and highly esteems the Captain, and recognises the value of his versatility, especially his ability to survey the estate, nevertheless declares herself as opposed to the invitation, because the presence of a third person may easily disturb their happiness. She reminds Eduard of the wish he expressed after the wedding, that they might at first live wholly for one another. For this reason she has placed her only daughter, Luciane, and her dear niece, Ottilie, in a boarding-school. It is especially hard for her to leave Ottilie there, who is not at all understood either by Luciane or by the head mistress. As she gives up Ottilie, Eduard should also give up the Captain. As it is they have plenty of work before them, and so many forms of agreeable entertainment, such as reminiscences of the past, reading, and music, that time would not soon seem long to them.

Eduard admits all this, but cannot understand how their happy, comfortable life could be disturbed by the presence of the Captain. He thinks rather that it would gain by it, but foregoes his desire for the present, until the news arrives that the Captain is going to accept a position elsewhere. Then Eduard begs Charlotte so earnestly that she can no longer refuse. She is even forced to join in her husband's request. In writing her postscript to his letter she makes an ominous ink-splotch, which is rather unusual for one so circumspect. Such premonitions play an important rôle in the whole novel. This one arouses our suspense; we wonder how the new element will fit into the given conditions.

The Captain arrives. The effect at first is that Charlotte becomes more lonely than before, because the men spend a great deal of time by themselves. Only in the evening is the little company regularly united. The Captain, who is deeply interested in natural science, turns the conversation and reading to physics and chemistry. One evening something is read from a book on chemistry about elective affinities. As Charlotte does not understand the expression the Captain explains it. When two compounds are brought together, each of which contains an element that has a closer affinity for an element in the other than for the elements with which it is combined, the compounds break up spontaneously and each element enters into a new combination with other elements for which it has a greater affinity. For example, on this supposition the combinations AB and CD would dissolve and the combinations AD and BC be formed. Eduard, always ready to say something and rarely comprehending the full significance of his words, immediately makes a jesting application. Charlotte is A, he is B, who is in a measure drawn away from A by C, the Captain, wherefore she should provide herself with a D, with whom she could unite, and D is without question the little lady Ottilie. Charlotte cannot admit that the comparison is apt, but seizes the opportunity to make known to Eduard and the

Captain that she really has come to the conclusion to send for Ottilie.

Ottilie's life in the boarding-school was a series of humiliations. As it was not in her power to gain a purely intellectual grasp of things, she learned slowly and her answers to questions were neither ready nor clear. Her domestic virtues met with as little consideration as did her deep sincerity. She was always looked upon as one of the poorest pupils and every letter from the head mistress concerning her was full of sighs and complaints. Luciane, on the other hand, received unlimited praise. She stood first in every subject and had again just passed the yearly examinations with brilliancy.

The report of the assistant master was somewhat different. He had to admit Luciane's excellent work, but felt forced to add that she vaunted her prizes and records haughtily in order deeply to offend Ottilie, toward whom she cherished an instinctive aversion, and that she found many other occasions to assert her superiority over her cousin. He then painted a very sympathetic picture of Ottilie, and we surmise that his personal feelings toward the boarding-school girl were not wholly indifferent.

Ottilie appears at the castle. After the first conversation Eduard remarks to Charlotte, "She is an agreeable, entertaining girl." "Entertaining?" replies Charlotte, "she never opened her mouth." "Is that so?" says Eduard, surprised. This first sign of the power of attraction which Ottilie exerts over Eduard shows the poet's very clever invention. The attraction soon grows stronger and it becomes clear that the reason why Eduard had had no eye for her charms before his marriage with Charlotte was that he had stubbornly set his heart upon achieving his first desire.

The intercourse of the four people thus thrown together is wholly above suspicion. It comes about very naturally that Charlotte and the Captain come closer and closer together, as do Eduard and Ottilie. The Captain, no longer so monopolised by Eduard, has more time to devote himself

to Charlotte's favourite undertaking, the laying out of the park; and Ottilie and Eduard meet each other in the garden and play music together in the evening. The striking feature is the skill with which Ottilie has learned to accompany Eduard's faulty playing of the flute. As everybody feels at home and contented, their life together grows more cheerful and more agreeable than ever. This is in a measure due to Ottilie's appearance and activity. She quickly gains an insight into the whole management of the household; in fact, she has from the beginning some feeling of how things are done. The better she becomes acquainted with everything the more heartily she lends a hand, the more quickly she understands every look, every movement, even a half-word, or a sound. Her quiet attention and her reposeful activity remain ever the same. Whether she sits down, rises, goes, or comes, every motion is always pleasing and without any sign of unrest, and her angelic beauty casts a mild sunshine over everything.

Charlotte's apprehension of the disturbance that would be caused by the presence of a third person seems at first to have been wholly unwarranted; but gradually passion enters into the intercourse. The mutual attraction becomes dangerously serious, more especially in the case of Ottilie and Eduard. He begins to look upon her as his guardian spirit, whose presence delights him and whose absence pains him. Neither can Ottilie help admitting to herself that the stately, warm-hearted, good man, of whom she was so fond in her childhood, and who showed such an appreciative interest in everything she did, is now growing dearer and dearer to her. Meanwhile everything that is done and said is within proper bounds.

Charlotte's birthday approaches. The event is celebrated by the laying of the corner stone of a new house on the summit of the opposite slope of the valley. On account of its wide outlook and the nearness of some small lakes the house is to be used in the future as a summer residence. The following day is marked by the arrival of a strange friend of the family, a former clergyman, by

the name of Mittler, who is now managing an estate of his own in the neighbourhood, but still enjoys practising his old art of settling family quarrels. Here there is evidently no occasion for the exercise of his art. He has come merely for the purpose of extending to Charlotte his belated congratulations on her birthday. When he hears that the Count and the Baroness have announced their intention of coming for a visit, he prepares to depart immediately, for he cannot endure these two people. The Baroness is divorced from her husband and the Count is a married man. Their *liaison* is tolerated by society outside the Count's place of residence. "Be on your guard," cries Mittler to his friends, "they will bring nothing but misfortune." Then follows a fiery encomium on matrimony, which, like the *Helena*-act of the second part of *Faust*, becomes the climax toward which everything in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* points. "Whoever attacks the marriage state," he exclaims, "whoever in word or deed undermines this one foundation of moral society, will have to deal with me. . . . It is the source of so much happiness that any individual case of unhappiness is not to be counted against it. And why do they talk of unhappiness? It is impatience that from time to time comes over a man, and then he is pleased to call himself unhappy. If one will only let the moment pass one will count one's self happy that what has so long existed still exists. . . This human condition stands so high in sorrows and in joys that it is impossible to estimate how much a man and his wife are indebted to each other. It is an endless debt, which can only be paid by eternity. It may be uncomfortable at times, that I can well believe, and that is as it should be. Are we not also wedded to our consciences, of which we should often be glad to rid ourselves, because they are more uncomfortable for us than ever a husband or wife could be?"

Hardly has Mittler finished speaking when we perceive in word and deed a full contrast to his words. A carriage rolls up from which the Count and the Baroness descend. At dinner the conversation happens to turn to the subject

of matrimony and both the newly arrived guests express themselves in a jesting tone, as frivolous worldlings, to whom marriage obligations seem as incomprehensible as they are uncomfortable. Charlotte finds it difficult to give the conversation a different turn. In the further course of the day the Count has an opportunity to become better acquainted with the Captain, of whose ability he forms such a favourable opinion that he decides to recommend him immediately to a princely friend who is seeking such a man. When Charlotte hears of it she is thunderstruck. She bursts into tears and for the first time becomes conscious of how firmly her affection for the Captain has taken hold on her. The guests decide to remain for the night, which the author paints with dazzling art, in order to show the Count's seductive influence upon Eduard and to reveal the estrangement between him and Charlotte through the veil of a tender matrimonial scene.

The frivolous guests have departed. Eduard, Charlotte, and the Captain take a walk together, while Ottilie remains at home in order to finish the hurried copying of a document for Eduard. The strollers come to the middle lake, step into a boat, and are about to push off from the shore, when Eduard, who feels drawn back to Ottilie, makes a flimsy excuse and quickly leaps out. Darkness comes on. The Captain, not being thoroughly acquainted with the fairway, runs the boat aground. Fortunately the water is not deep and he carries Charlotte dry to land. When he sets her down on the shore, and her arms, as though held by some invisible force, still cling for a moment to his neck, the firm man loses control of his feelings and presses a kiss upon her lips. He recovers his presence of mind immediately, falls on his knees, and begs Charlotte's forgiveness. Although there is a still more violent heaving in Charlotte's breast, she controls herself with great force, and says with the moral earnestness which permeates her character: "That this moment shall mark an epoch in our lives it is beyond our power to prevent; but whether it be an epoch worthy of us depends upon what we do. You must leave."

The two return quietly to the castle, where a companion scene has meanwhile taken place. Ottilie, having finished the copy, hands it to Eduard. He is astonished to see how toward the end Ottilie's peculiar handwriting has changed into an exact reproduction of his own. "That is my hand!" he exclaims delighted. Ottilie remains silent, but gazes into his eyes with a look of great satisfaction. "You love me, Ottilie, you love me!"—and they hold each other in a long embrace. The entrance of Charlotte and the Captain separates them.

In the evening all retire early to their rooms, except Eduard, who roams about in the warm moonlight until he falls asleep from weariness on the terrace under Ottilie's window. This reminds one of how Wilhelm Meister spent a night in front of Mariane's house, and of how one evening after a walk with Lili, during the period of their betrothal, Goethe himself found it impossible to go to his room and remained out in the open air till morning brought him back to his beloved. Eduard's passion no longer knows any bounds. Ottilie is everything to him; to possess her is his only thought. His conscience is silenced. He is happy when he discovers that Charlotte is deeply in love with the Captain. He hopes that it will now be easy to obtain a divorce, and by representing to Ottilie that Charlotte entertains the same desire, he pacifies the heart of the innocent, inexperienced girl and inspires her with most alluring hopes.

The summer draws to an end. The house, of which the cornerstone was laid on Charlotte's birthday, is to be raised with solemn ceremony on Ottilie's birthday. After nightfall there is to be a display of fireworks on the middle lake. A multitude of people crowd around. The ground gives way along the shore and several people fall into the water. The older ones save themselves easily, but one boy goes under and the Captain draws him lifeless from the water. The Captain and Charlotte hasten with the drowned boy to the castle in order to resuscitate him there if possible, while the assembled multitude, saddened by

the accident, leaves the place. Eduard remains and persuades Ottilie to stay with him. She must watch the fireworks which have been prepared in her honour, and which are now shot off at Eduard's command. It makes a horrible impression as the rockets, Roman candles, and pinwheels hiss and whiz along the unfortunate lake. Nothing else could put Eduard's almost insane love for Ottilie in such a strong light as his insistence upon the carrying out of the empty spectacle. Our only wonder is that Ottilie's refined nature is not repulsed by the lack of feeling and tact shown by Eduard's command. The noisy, exploding fire-magic is, it is true, disagreeable to her, but her love for Eduard is not diminished. Perhaps we shall later receive an explanation of this.

When the drowned boy has been restored to life and all has become quiet in the castle, the Captain informs Charlotte that he will soon depart, as he is thinking of accepting the position which the Count has procured him. The next morning he is gone. Charlotte bears his departure with great composure. As a letter from the Count speaks of a fitting marriage for the Captain she looks upon this also as a settled matter and gives up "absolutely and completely" all hopes of ever being united with her dear friend.

In such a frame of mind it is easy for her to speak frankly with Eduard concerning his passion for Ottilie and to represent to him that the best thing for the peace of all concerned would be for Ottilie to leave the house. Far from heeding the voice of reason, Eduard shudders at the thought that Ottilie may again be thrown among strangers, where she would not be understood and where her life would be miserable. In order to postpone matters and, as he thinks, to save Ottilie, he declares in a letter to Charlotte that he will himself go away, demanding that Charlotte meanwhile make no attempt to find a place for Ottilie away from home. Outside of the home estate she belongs to him and he will take possession of her. If, however, Charlotte respects his wishes, he will not resist the return of a healthy state of affairs, provided the evil show signs of passing away.

He writes the last words without any faith in them and rides away.

The two women are alone. Little as Eduard has the composure of the Captain, just so little has Ottilie that of Charlotte. Through Eduard and in him Ottilie has for the first time found real life and joy. Hitherto her life had been indifferent, empty, and lacking in vitality. Now that he has vanished, her spirit seems to be broken, and she feels most at home in solitude. Lonely walks and boating, always with a book at hand, that she may dream herself into a world of fancy, where she will find Eduard, are her only forms of recreation. Activity, which has such a wholesome influence on any soul, is crowded into the background.

The old peace-maker, Mittler, has heard of the estrangement between Eduard and Charlotte, and institutes a search for Eduard in order to make an attempt to reconcile them. He finds him easily on a modest little tract of land not very far from his large estate. But Eduard is still determined to possess Ottilie, and advises Mittler, if he wishes to accomplish any good, to persuade Charlotte to decide in favour of a divorce. Mittler accepts the commission, in order to gain time and to learn the sentiments of the women. When he arrives at the castle Charlotte tells him that she is looking forward to the birth of a child. Mittler considers his mission now ended; according to his experience, this fact is sufficient to remove any ill-feeling between husband and wife. How greatly he is deceived! He judges everybody by the average man as he knows him. Eduard's passion, however, goes far beyond the average man's love. He feels not the slightest thrill of joy at the reception of the news. On the contrary, he is beside himself when he realises that this new circumstance makes a divorce from Charlotte and a union with Ottilie still more difficult, perhaps impossible. In order to rid himself of torment he decides to go to the war. If he perish, it will please him, for his death will liberate him and all concerned. Ottilie learns nothing of his determination; she is informed

only of Charlotte's expectations, and yields to her fate as a sacrificial victim. She has not yet the moral strength for voluntary resignation.

Here ends the first part of the novel.

At the beginning of the second part we are surprised by a complete change of tone. The action advances slowly and leisurely. The author often stops to speak with us, allows secondary characters to come forward and entertain us at length, inserts episodes, narratives, and diary leaves, which have but a very loose connection with the action of the novel, or even none at all. This is particularly true of the first eleven chapters. One cannot help surmising—in fact, it is here and there possible to demonstrate—that, with the exception of a short passage, these chapters were inserted in the second redaction to fill up a gap. What may have been the author's reason for making these insertions? He needed time; time for Eduard to return from the war, time for the child of Eduard and Charlotte to be born. He needed time also for Ottilie's health to be undermined by long sorrow. Merely to have announced to the reader that this time passes would have been following a well established though poor precedent. An artistic writer always considers it his duty to give the reader the feeling that between one phase of the development of the plot and another there really lies a considerable space of time. Such a feeling can be aroused only by the employment of some of the various means of retarding the action. In this way it was possible for the author at the same time to allay the over-excitement, which classic German esthetics always sought to avoid, especially in the novel. It also gave him an opportunity to provide a period of rest and a wealth of practical wisdom to strengthen the souls of his readers for the tragic effect of the issue of the action.

This practical wisdom is supplied us chiefly by Ottilie's diary. That such wisdom is not altogether in place in her diary causes the author very little disturbance. He helps himself out of the dilemma by saying that Ottilie entered in her diary not only her own thoughts, but the

thoughts of others as well. Inasmuch, then, as retardations themselves have their deep justification, it is to be regretted that so little art was employed by Goethe in the choice and insertion of them.

First of all he brings into the foreground a young architect, who has been summoned to superintend the laying out of the park and the construction of the summer home. He is attracted by Ottilie's charming appearance, as Eduard and the assistant master in the boarding-school had been. Ottilie soon begins to show an inclination toward him and the frescoing of the old church often unites them in common work. Thus a new complication which may lead to a solution of the old one appears in the distance. We begin to breathe a little more easily.

The year advances and winter sets in. It would have been an endless winter in the lonely castle if Luciane's visit had not afforded some diversion. She has left the boarding-school and has made her début in society at the home of a relative. Her brilliant qualities could not fail to make an impression, and she was soon betrothed. She now comes to introduce her betrothed to her mother.

It is very characteristic of Charlotte that her relation to her daughter is marked with such coolness, while she loves her niece so cordially. She has permitted her daughter to celebrate her betrothal away from home and still remains estranged from her even during the visit. The natures of mother and daughter belong at opposite poles.

Luciane brings with her, in addition to her betrothed, her great aunt, and her friends, a swarm of man-servants and waiting-maids and whole wagon-loads of trunks, chests, and boxes. Every day has its well-filled programme. The whole region round about is visited; balls, dinners, musical entertainments, living pictures, and the chase keep the company constantly occupied, both at home and away from home. Nor will Luciane permit Ottilie in any way to withdraw from the gay festivities; in fact it affords her a kind of cruel delight to take her cousin around with her and drag her into all the social tumult. The noisy company

stays two months and then departs. The episode has been uncomfortable and often vexatious; to Ottilie it has brought more than one insult; but it has afforded variety and activity, and has in a measure prevented her brooding over herself.

The architect also leaves the castle soon, without having found in Ottilie's bearing any grounds for hoping ever to win her. She likes him, she takes an interest in him, but she is not in love with him. He is supplanted by the assistant master from the boarding-school, the third minor figure to come out of the darkness into the light. The master's coming is not without a definite purpose. He is to assume control of the boarding-school and needs a wife to help him in the undertaking. His heart has long ago decided in favour of Ottilie. May he hope to win her? He does not venture to make known his desire to Ottilie herself; he discloses his purpose to Charlotte alone, who puts him off to some future time.

The winter draws to an end and the first green of spring appears. Charlotte gives birth to a son. The child is born of deception. As an evidence of this it bears the features of the Captain and Ottilie. As a creature of deception it is doomed to die; for only truth has real life. The guilt of its death must fall upon those who are to blame for its inwardly untrue existence and have not atoned for their guilt by overcoming self, that is, Eduard and Ottilie.

Such approximately was doubtless the philosophico-ethical scheme which Goethe evolved in his mind for the closing chapters.

Prophetic of the curse visited upon the innocent child, the aged clergyman dies at the baptism. Ottilie looks upon him with a kind of envy. "The life of her soul is killed; why should the body still be preserved?" Nevertheless the young child seems to bring her a blessing, to lead her to a new life. She loves it and assumes the care of it. As she carries it about on beautiful spring days through the garden and the park, viewing the rich estate and considering how happy the lot of this child might be if he were to grow up

beneath the eyes of parents bound together by love, it dawns clearly upon her mind that her love for Eduard, in order to grow perfect, must become wholly unselfish. She believes that she has the strength to relinquish her beloved; indeed, never to see him again.

She overestimates her strength. She is a peculiar being, who is under the sway of the forces of nature, and the resistance of this control of nature requires moral powers quite different from those with which she is endowed. In order to make it very clear to us how Ottilie is under the control of the forces of nature, and at the same time to prepare us for a right understanding of the further development that takes place in her nature which is at bottom so noble, Goethe resorts to a very peculiar device. He has a lord and his companion come to the castle by accident. The companion, who incidentally tells the immortal novelette of the "strange children of the neighbours," belongs to the contemporary philosophers of nature, who were convinced of a wonderful mutual influence between inorganic nature and peculiarly organised people, and were strengthened in this conviction by observations which had been made in 1806 and 1807 on Campetti, the phenomenal Italian boy. Ottilie has observed that on a certain road her head begins to ache. The Englishman explores the vicinity of this road and discovers plain traces of coal. Then he has her make the pendulum experiment, which had also been made with the Campetti boy, and immediately the pendulum swings, whereas in Charlotte's hands it had not moved from its position of rest. The magnetic fluid upon which Mesmer based his teaching passes through Ottilie without hindrance, while it is checked in Charlotte by her moral power.

After these various episodes the plot begins again to develop in a more lively and more straightforward fashion.

From the war, in which he had wantonly exposed himself to all sorts of dangers, Eduard returns home without a single wound. He looks upon his experience as a divine ordeal, and all his old wishes now assert themselves with

greater force than ever. He sends for the Captain and begs him to intercede with Charlotte to begin suit for a divorce. All the objections which the Captain offers fall to the ground in Eduard's mind. Eduard foresees nothing but unhappiness if things continue as they are, and only happiness if they are adjusted according to his will. He thinks that the Captain and Charlotte, he and Ottilie, would be happy pairs, and that the new-born son would be best cared for if he were reared by the Captain and Charlotte. The Captain finally reaches the point where he is unable further to answer Eduard's arguments, especially as his own desires have not been wholly conquered, and he believes it his duty to respond to Eduard's passionate appeal and approach Charlotte on the subject. Eduard feels so certain of a favourable issue, and is at the same time so feverishly impatient, that he begs the Captain to indicate to him Charlotte's consent by means of a salute of cannon, or, in case darkness shall have come on, by means of rockets. He himself will await these signals in a village situated very near the paternal estate.

The Captain does not find Charlotte at home; she is away on a visit in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile Eduard, unable to control his impatience, steals along lonely paths into the park surrounding the castle, goes farther and farther, and finally sees Ottilie sitting with the child by the middle lake. He flies to her and falls at her feet. A stormy love scene follows; Ottilie is unable longer to resist her feelings; and they kiss each other for the first time "passionately and without restraint." Then, however, she anxiously urges him to depart, and he obeys her command. Meanwhile evening has come on, the sun has set, and in order to reach the house quickly with the child, Ottilie decides to take the shortest route and row across the lake. While pushing off from the shore in her great excitement, with the child in her arms, and a book in her hand, she loses her equilibrium, falls into the boat, and the child is thrown from her arms into the water. She succeeds in catching it by its dress and drawing it out of the water,

but too late to save its tender life. When Charlotte returns home she finds the child dead. Deep sorrow fills her soul. Ottilie is lying on the floor in a deathlike torpor. Charlotte lifts her head to her knees. She thinks Ottilie asleep, overcome by exhaustion and grief. It is far along in the night when she lets the Captain in and asks what he desires. He presents his request, and with profound seriousness and gentle firmness she replies that she gives her consent to the separation. "I ought to have made up my mind to do it sooner; by my delay I have killed my child." But she gives the Captain no ground for hope in his own suit.

He carries the news to Eduard, who has already heard of the death of the child, but has shown no emotion except the feeling of satisfaction that this hindrance no longer lies athwart his path. Now that Charlotte has consented to the divorce he is minded to go at once to the nearest city in order to arrange further details. That he has no conception whatever of Ottilie's state of mind is easy for us to comprehend. We know that he has very little power of appreciating the sentiments of another and always looks upon everything in the light most favourable to his own desires. But we find it hard to understand why Ottilie, with her wonderful power of intuition, has shown no signs of pain at Eduard's selfishness, which under the heat of passion has revealed itself as almost brutal. It is also difficult to explain her insensibility toward his other serious moral defects. This is even more perplexing in the love scene by the lake than it was on the evening of the fireworks.

Ottilie has overheard the conversation between the Captain and Charlotte, but does not arouse from her torpor until after the Captain's departure. "I have strayed from my path," she declares to her beloved aunt; "God has opened my eyes in a terrible way to the crime in which I am an accomplice. I shall never become Eduard's wife!" She begs her aunt to take back her consent to the separation from her husband, declaring that otherwise she herself will atone for her crime in the same lake in which the child was

drowned. Charlotte promises to take back her consent, secretly hoping that Ottilie will change her mind and will find at Eduard's side the happiness which she herself has been denied.

Ottilie remains steadfast. She has been able to win reconciliation with herself only by vowing in the depth of her heart to renounce her love completely. It is possible for her in this frame of mind to remain with Charlotte and to associate with her with as much freedom from restraint as before. She begins gradually, however, to feel the need of a change of surroundings; the familiar places bring back too many sad memories. She also longs to devote herself to some beneficent work and thus to rid her conscience more thoroughly of its terrible burden. Believing that she will find such an occupation in the education of children, she is willing to return to the boarding-school. In reply to Charlotte's question, whether she can trust herself to remain firm if Eduard should approach her personally, she takes the vow not even to enter into a conversation with him. Charlotte sends a message to Eduard to inform him of Ottilie's determination, lest he might think that she herself has sent her niece away, and then make an attempt to take possession of her by force, as he once threatened to do.

At the same time that Mittler delivers Charlotte's message to Eduard, Ottilie sets out on her journey. As the journey takes more than one day she is forced to spend a night in an inn on the way. On receiving the news Eduard has but one thought, that he must speak with Ottilie. He finds out in what inn she is to pass the night and rides thither. In a letter glowing with love, which he leaves in her room, he implores her once more to be his. Ottilie arrives, reads the letter, lays it aside, and motions Eduard to leave the room, with a beseeching and commanding gesture. The following morning he again steps up to her, and again asks her in a loving tone whether she will be his. She indicates her refusal by a shake of her head and orders the coachman to drive back to the castle. Eduard

follows on horseback. At the castle she seizes violently the hands of husband and wife, brings them together, and hurries away to her room.

Ottilie now makes the fatal mistake of remaining in the castle, instead of starting again on her journey to the boarding-school. True, she preserves her silence, her attitude of refusal, but when she is in the same room with Eduard she has to join him and sit down by him. When he reads she has to look at his book; when he takes up his flute she has to accompany him on the piano. Eduard's hopes are as strong as they could possibly be. He believes that it is only necessary for a certain length of time to elapse and that then everything will come out well. He is very much in error. Strong as is the power which his presence still exerts over Ottilie, her moral determination preserves her equilibrium. She is determined not only to hold fast her self-denial, but also to put an end to her life here below. She had tried to begin a new life. Employment in the boarding-school had offered her the opportunity; but when Eduard placed himself in her way she believed that it was decreed that she should not begin life anew. So she longs for death. She denies herself food and drink. In order to be able to do this without hindrance she has begged permission to eat in her room. Her strength is gradually consumed, but it is scarcely noticeable; for when she appears in society she holds herself up by her great force of will.

Mittler has come for a visit. The conversation drifts around to the ten commandments. Mittler finds fault with them that so many of them have a negative character. How much more beautiful the sixth commandment would be if it read: Thou shalt show reverence for the marriage tie; when thou seest husband and wife who love one another, thou shalt rejoice and share in their happiness, as thou wouldst share in the happiness of a clear day. If any cloud should arise in their relation to one another, thou shalt seek to clear it away; thou shalt seek to propitiate them, to pacify them, to point out clearly to them their mutual advantages, and thou shalt with beautiful unselfishness

promote the welfare of others, by making them feel what happiness arises from every duty, and especially from that which binds husband and wife inseparably together.

While Mittler is explaining the commandment in this way Ottilie arises with pallid face and leaves the room. Soon afterward Nanny, a village girl who has become very much attached to her, rushes into the room with the cry, "Miss Ottilie is dying!" All hasten to her room. She is sitting pale as death upon the sofa and answers all questions by gestures. She opens her lips but once, to say to Eduard, who is kneeling beside her: "Promise me to live." He promises, but she has already fallen asleep.

Her funeral, and everything immediately connected with it, is elaborately described with many impressive sentimental details, which are wholly superfluous for the ending of the novel, and very surprising in a work of Goethe.

Ottilie is buried in an open coffin. From an upper story of her house Nanny watches the funeral procession pass by. Her beloved mistress seems to beckon to her. In her confusion she leans over too far and falls to the ground below. Her apparently crushed body is picked up and laid across the corpse. Soon she springs up with all her members whole. She insists on being allowed to watch the whole night alone in the chapel beside the coffin, which is left open. Soon the architect, who has hastened hither from a distance, enters the chapel. His emotions are narrated to us in full. Nanny, the village girl, speaks to the grief-stricken man with so much force, truth, and eloquence, that he leaves the church comforted. During the following days new visitors arrive. After Nanny's accident Ottilie's corpse is popularly believed to perform miracles. The old, the infirm, and the sick, and mothers with their children, come in throngs to experience the miraculous power of the deceased saint—this, too, in a Protestant church and community. Goethe here paid his full tribute to the Catholic tendency of Romanticism.[64] He made Ottilie write in her diary: "Even the greatest man is connected with his century by some weakness."

What becomes of Eduard?

With the death of Ottilie he has lost his last support, and knows of nothing better to do—or, according to Goethe's idea, is unable, with the dependence of his nature upon Ottilie, to do anything else—than to imitate her example and by fasting follow her to the grave. He finds it very difficult. One day he remarks to the Captain: "It is a terrible task to imitate the inimitable. I see plainly that it requires genius to accomplish anything, even to suffer martyrdom." Nevertheless his efforts are successful. He is finally found dead. His body is buried by the side of Ottilie.

"Thus the lovers lie side by side. Peace hovers above their resting-place, serene pictures of kindred angels look down upon them from the ceiling, and what a joyful moment there will be on that day when they awake together!"

We have followed with profound agitation the fate of the four chief characters And yet, in spite of the fact that we have been so deeply stirred, toward the end we have become conscious of a growing inconsistency, which disturbs the purity of the emotions by which we are to be raised from pain to exaltation. This is especially true from the time when Ottilie returns. That she should give up her journey in order to reunite Eduard and Charlotte is a great and beautiful invention of the poet and in every way worthy of her. But why does she remain at the castle? She gives in a letter a mystical explanation of her conduct, declaring that some hostile demon has gained power over her. We know what she intends by these words: she refers to the magical power which Eduard's presence exerts over her. But can we fancy this power so absolute? So long as Ottilie has no clear consciousness of her guilt, so long as the pangs of conscience and remorse have not seized upon her and brought her to renunciation and through renunciation raised her to a free moral personality, it may perhaps seem to us credible that this attraction should be irresistible; but no longer. If she has acquired sufficient

moral force to remain near the man she loves and maintain an unbroken silence; if she has gained the power over herself to renounce her lover for ever, when the only person who could raise any objection to her union with him opens the door for her to enter into it; if she has the strength of will to starve herself in her lover's presence with clear consciousness, in order to part from him for ever—she must also have the force of character to separate herself from him by going to another place to live, where she can carry on the good already accomplished in the reunion of husband and wife. We have all the more reason to expect this, inasmuch as her departure is made easier by the opportunity to engage in an occupation which, she thoroughly believes, will be to her a means of atonement, purification, and great blessing. Her way of expressing it is, that in the education of the young she would be taking up a sacred calling, by means of which she might perhaps be able to atone for her monstrous evil both for herself and for the others. She feels in advance the pleasure which she will find in the calling. "How serenely I shall look upon the embarrassments of the young, and smile at their childlike grievances, then lead them with gentle hand out of all their little errors." Finally she utters the profoundly truthful words: "If I am found happy in my work, and untiring in the performance of my duty, then I can bear the gaze of every man, because I need not shun the eyes of God."

Are we to suppose that a girl who has attained to such a high conception of things would allow herself to be held spellbound by a man with whom she has long considered it a sin to maintain an intimate relation? Would she allow him to draw her from the straight path of usefulness, which promises to lead her to salvation? And even though the clear, straightforward character of her thoughts and of her sound moral desires be for a moment obscured by the demonic influence of a strong passion, must it not immediately afterward reassert itself? Must she not again fight her way through to a clear consciousness of the danger, the culpability, of her lingering at the castle, and must

not her conscience then so much the more relentlessly drive her away? Does she not now incur guilt anew? does she not, in fact, now for the first time consciously incur guilt? That her moral power has not been benumbed is proved by her voluntary death. Can she hope then to atone for her guilt by death? The poet assumes that she can. He has her die like a saint—doubtless in memory of St. Ottilia—and her body perform miracles, according to the belief of the people.[65]

Perhaps Ottilie's train of thought was different. Perhaps she said to herself that she would bring Eduard back to Charlotte more quickly and more effectually by her death than by going away to the boarding-school. Looking upon herself as one consecrated to death she may have condoned her weakness in allowing herself to be everywhere Eduard's companion. But if she had died merely for the purpose of hastening the complete reconciliation between Eduard and Charlotte, the author, who often tells us the thoughts and feelings which inspire the actions of his characters,—a thing contrary to the strict demands of the present-day technique of the novel—would have indicated the fact, would, in truth, have been obliged to indicate it. Not only does he not do this, he even points us in another direction. The desire to make possible the reconciliation of husband and wife was doubtless her final motive in dying, but not her immediate motive. If she had felt sure of herself, she would have avoided death and would have devoted herself to an atoning, sanctifying calling, according to her original intention. In any case she was not certain to what decision her death would drive Eduard; for she deemed it necessary to exact from him the promise that he would live. She did not even know to what she herself might come, if she remained longer on earth. The meeting with Eduard after their separation showed her plainly that she was still under the pleasing spell, and that henceforth there was for her, a second Emilia Galotti, no other rescue but death. That such was the author's chain of reasoning he himself stated clearly

and with emphasis in a conversation with Riemer shortly after the completion of the work: "The sensuous must gain the mastery, but must be punished by the moral nature, which preserves its freedom by death. . . . So Ottilie must chasten * herself, and Eduard must do likewise, after they have given free course to their love."

How the author could have assumed that, after all that has gone before, Ottilie is still so completely under the sway of passion, in spite of her noble and highly developed moral nature, is difficult to understand. We may even venture to doubt Eduard's strong power of attraction, as the author has employed it in the immediately preceding stages of the action. That a bashful young girl, just out of boarding-school, should for the first time in her life be the object of the passionate love, devotion, and adoration of a man who appears to her handsome, noble, sincere, and benevolent, and that she should warmly and fully return the love of this man, who all at once makes the world seem to her a paradise, is to be understood. Charlotte had also loved him in her youth, and later, still half deceived as to his real character, had married him. But her love had soon lost its power over her. Ottilie's love, on the other hand, remains unshaken, even after she has become acquainted with Eduard's whimsicality, tactlessness, rudeness, and childishness: even after, among other things, she has seen him stay for the display of fireworks, seen him fly into a rage over the criticism of his flute-playing, seen his lack of compassion at the death of his child, and his lack of delicacy of feeling in ordering the discharge of a cannon; after she has for weeks and months been able to compare him, his weak aspirations, and his ordinary talents, with her aunt and the Captain, by the side of whom he appears to so great disadvantage. If he had at least some winsome accomplishment, if he were an ardent poet, a captivating singer, an entrancing performer on some musical instru-

* *Karterieren*, the word Goethe used, is from the Greek καρτερεῖν, to endure, hold out, persist. *Cf.* Riemer, *Mitteilungen über Goethe*, ii, 607.—C.

ment, or even if he could but pour out the sorrows of a world with charming sentimentality on Ottilie's bosom, like Fernando, of whom he is a veritable, though inferior, copy, we could understand his power over Ottilie. But he is none of these. The effect is supposed to be due entirely to his beauty, which is not even held up as especially captivating, and, besides, is referred to more in his youth than later. Ottilie, who is supposed to be so influenced by his beauty, is not sensuous by nature, and when she has been subjected to the first rude trials of fate she turns with all her soul to her heavenly home above this world of sense. We cannot believe that she is so affected by Eduard's beauty. We have to do here with an inconsistency, as in *Stella*. Eduard should have been endowed with higher gifts, or Ottilie with commoner qualities.[66]

Against these criticisms it may be urged that such enigmatical entanglements between husband and wife do occur. That may be. Such abnormal phenomena may now and then be observed in real life; but when we meet with such a thing we shrug our shoulders and say we do not understand it. To give such an explanation of a literary invention would be the severest condemnation. In literature we desire to understand, we must understand, for the author is the creator. He creates the souls of his characters, and hence it is within his power and is his duty to show us what attractions exist between them. The power and the magic charm of fiction lie in the fact that it illuminates for us the mysterious depths of life.

Goethe did not reveal the secret in this case; he made no use of his right as a creator: he simply gave us to understand that it was a miracle.[67] Ottilie and Eduard belong together by nature, like two elements between which there exists an elective affinity. In the description of the last days of Ottilie's life we read that if one of the two had been held fast at the farthest end of the castle the other "would unintentionally have found the way thither, little by little."[68] "Ottilie was unable to free herself from blissful necessity." When they were together "they were as a

single human being in the enjoyment of perfect, unconscious delight." As a single human being, bound together by natural law! Hence Ottilie's inability to depart from the castle. Hence also the wonderfully strange symptom that Ottilie had a headache on the left side and Eduard on the right side. Hence even the trunk filled with beautiful clothes, which he gives her for her birthday, must afford her refreshing consolation. She throws herself upon it, after she has laid Eduard's hand in Charlotte's; she opens it shortly before her death and selects one of the costly dresses for her shroud. Eduard's magnetic power has been transferred to the trunk which he has touched,—a most painful motive, which the author employed to carry out the assumption of compulsion by nature.

Goethe once said to Eckermann that *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* was the only one of his larger works in which he had consciously followed out one idea all the way through. This following out of one idea was not advantageous for the novel, as we have already seen, because he forced the idea, which we may characterise simply as the conflict between duty and inclination, into a scientific formula, for the solution of which he had recourse to the obscure forces of nature. The formula of elective affinity led him also to develop the problem according to a more elaborate scheme than was necessary. In order not to leave the representation of his idea incomplete, as it would have been with only three characters in the plot, he created two pairs of lovers, one of which represented the victory of duty over inclination, the other the victory of inclination over duty. The second pair had to come to a tragic end; for in their case it is only by death that moral freedom is to triumph over compulsion by nature. This compulsion drags Ottilie to the grave. And yet we must admit that, powerful as was the natural impulse up to that time, her choice of death was nevertheless an act of moral freedom.

Is this also true of Eduard? The author intended that it should be, and asserts that it is. But when Eduard follows Ottilie to death is it proper to speak of his moral

freedom? Is it not rather a case of moral impotence, which is another way of saying compulsion by nature? Even if Eduard does follow Ottilie into the beyond, why should the author, instead of leaving the reader with all the awful, and yet uplifting, seriousness of death, point him in a closing passage to the resurrection, which will see the lovers happily united? How great in its simplicity is the close of *Werther* in comparison! Here again we are forced to impute to the weakly, romantic spirit of the time the blame for this artistically ineffective and inwardly untrue ending. Inwardly untrue, because the author does not believe in the resurrection of the body, neither does Ottilie, as is proved by her diary; artistically ineffective, because it leaves the reader with the repulsive idea[69] that in the futrue life Ottilie will be united with Eduard, who is wholly unworthy of her, whereas we indulge ourselves with the hope that in the life beyond Ottilie will no longer be subject to compulsion by nature and will recognise Eduard in his true character.

When we consider the whole work and its greatness, the flaws which we have pointed out are very trifling in comparison. The work remains, in spite of all its defects, one of Goethe's highest achievements.

The simplest means are employed to make an occurrence among the better class of society most effective. We live through a year and a half at a country seat. We see four persons, whom one may almost call uninteresting, following their daily occupations, conversing with each other, taking pleasure walks, and entertaining each other with music and reading. Nothing extraordinary happens. Visitors come and go, birthdays are celebrated, and a house is raised. There is no influence from without, either of great events or of important surroundings. We witness neither the busy life of a great city nor the intrigues of society, neither the power and splendour of a court, nor the life of the theatre. Even the war in which Eduard takes part remains indistinct on the distant horizon. And yet from the very first pages our interest is aroused to the highest

pitch—merely by the soul-experiences of the few characters who appear upon the scene. In this respect the work is a perfect model of a novel such as is demanded by the esthetics of to-day. The delineation is delightfully reposeful and fine, reminding one most of all of the delicate, profound spirituality of *Tasso*. No hasty onward rush, no violent leaps and bounds; slow, organic growth and decay as in nature. The tones swell and die away in equally soft transitions. The results of a period of development sometimes come to light suddenly, it is true, but only for those concerned, not for us, who have long been prepared for them by an abundance of incidents which surprise and delight us with their apparent innocence and lack of purpose, as well as with their truthfulness and cleverness.

Every outward circumstance that is destined to play a part in the action is early brought to our attention in the most innocent connection. The presageful element is wonderfully carried out throughout the whole book. The lake, along which Eduard has planted plane and poplar trees in his youth, becomes an uncanny, fatal spot. On Charlotte's birthday Ottilie, at Eduard's request, lays the gold necklace, on which hangs the picture of her father, in the corner stone of the new house. She buries her past, which is as pure as gold. At the after-celebration of the same birthday Mittler delivers his forcible address on the significance and indissolubility of marriage. Whereas Charlotte's birthday passes by merrily and without anything to sadden the memory, Ottilie's is overcast with the shadow of an unhappy accident. Out of the asters which Ottilie plants the second spring is woven her funeral wreath; the chapel which she helps the architect decorate becomes her burial place. And so on. By these means the brilliancy and serenity are softened, and the whole is blended into a unified, elegiac tone, and our thoughts are turned from the present to the future, from the specific to the general. What does a funeral wreath signify to us? When we remember, however, that the seeds of the flowers out of which it was woven were once sowed by the deceased, it recalls

to us the common lot of man, how we wander as in the dark, not knowing whether we shall reap what we sow, whether the harvest is to be joy or sorrow.

The chief characters of the novel are created with great felicity. The author might, for example, have left all four young, but then the overcoming of self would have been harder to motivate in the case of Charlotte and the Captain; severer struggles, catastrophes, and complications would have been necessary, and the novel would have lost its simple repose. On the other hand, Eduard's passion as the manifestation of a natural force would not have been brought out so impressively. Besides, the difference in ages was in itself a source of greater attraction. It would have detracted from the simple beauty of the work if two married couples had been contrasted with each other, for even in that case the crises would have had to be serious and frequent and the whole work would have been robbed of the charm which lies in Ottilie's girlish inexperience. In the differentiation of the characters the thing of chief importance was to endow them with the properly varying degrees of moral strength and intellectual clearness. This the author did with great wisdom.

At the head stands Charlotte. She overtowers all in moral strength. This is woman's due, for morality is the foundation upon which she rests. The Captain resembles her, but does not equal her. In intellectual clearness he is her peer, but in genuine worldly wisdom he is inferior to her, for this is not merely a product of experience and clear thought and observation, but chiefly of native intuitions of the right. Contrasted with these two characters are Ottilie, who is young and noble, but is a prey to her passionate instincts and is brought to a moderate degree of enlightenment and reluctant resignation only after she has passed through an ordeal of suffering, and Eduard, who, though much older, has acquired, after all his experience, neither enlightenment nor moderation of his passions and desires. He is lacking in moral stamina, is nothing but an overgrown child. About these four are

grouped at various times the architect and the assistant master, Luciane and Nanny, the Count and the Baroness, now as duplicate, now as negative pictures of the chief characters, now supplementing them harmoniously, now serving as a foil to set them off more strikingly.

As in the case of *Werther*, a by no means slight charm of the work is due to the inner harmony between the events described and nature. It is early spring when Eduard and Charlotte celebrate their honeymoon; it is in the heat of summer that love reaches its full height between Charlotte and the Captain, and between Ottilie and Eduard; it is autumn when the future looms up before them all as a dreary winter; and it is again spring when the birth of the child brings new hope; but summer disappoints the hopes of spring, and when the leaves fall Ottilie is borne to her grave. And as the seasons accompany the development of the action with sympathetic accords, so do the different times of day, the weather, the natural environment, morning and evening, sun and moon, rock and bush, water and meadow.

With all the passion running through the work it stands before us in remarkable repose. The factor by no means least powerful in forcing the raging torrent into this calm regularity of movement is the style. The style is always even, even in elevation, even in repose. If here and there the evenness of elevation fails to meet with our approval the uninterrupted repose pleases us all the more. By means of his principle of style the author has succeeded in making the prose work leave on us the impression of a creation of Greek art, like that of his poetical works *Iphigenie*, *Tasso*, and *Hermann und Dorothea*. It might be compared with the *Niobe* group, being a notable example of pain forced into the repose of marble.

Let us now turn to the real substance of the work. The problem on its ethical side is the highest that can be imagined. The novel appears as a symbolical corroboration of Kant's categorical imperative, or of Spinoza's demand

that man shall make himself a *liber homo*, a truly free man, by bringing his desires into subjection. The ethics of the novel leaves no room for choice: whoever does not obey the moral law, must perish. To be sure, it is not easy to obey the moral law when nature rebels against it. But nature is not invincible. This is the consolation which Goethe gave his idealistic contemporaries, who, under the pressure exerted upon their minds by the mysticism of the philosophy of nature, mesmerism, and somnambulism, and by the great discovery of galvanism, began to be in terror of the mysterious power of nature. Nature is not invincible when it drives man to offend against the moral law. Whoever does not find within himself the power to overcome nature, must summon to his aid all the powers which can lend assistance: religion, science, art, work, and "the daily protection of hard service." Ottilie neglected to carry this out, though she made a beginning. Eduard made no beginning.

The general ethical doctrine of the novel culminates in the fight for the sacredness and the dignity of marriage. Never was marriage more gloriously defended than in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, and the only way to account for the criticism of the work as immoral in its tendency is on the basis of strange misunderstanding and unusual shortsightedness. "It [marriage] is the foundation of all moral society, the beginning and culmination of all civilisation. It makes the rough man gentle, and the most educated man has no better opportunity to prove his gentleness. It must be indissoluble. There is no sufficient ground for divorce." These are not merely utterances of Mittler, the zealous preacher of morals, in whose mouth they are put; they are Goethe's own deepest convictions, and furthermore the whole plot rests upon them. The violation, even in thought, of the sanctity of marriage is punished in this novel. Goethe's view of marriage had not always been so high and strict, although it was always serious and worthy. Later in life, in certain individual cases, he admitted of more liberty in practice,

especially with regard to the dissolubility of marriage,* whereas in principle he upheld the views enunciated by Mittler. He himself tells how Court Preacher Reinhard of Dresden often wondered at his entertaining such strict principles with regard to marriage, when he held such liberal views with regard to all other things. One will hardly be mistaken in assuming that the years of illness, from 1801 to 1805, during which he learned by Christiane's faithful care how incalculable is the debt which husband and wife owe one another, raised his respect for marriage to high and enduring reverence.[70] We have an outward sign of this from the year 1804, in the story of the younger Voss. He says that as Goethe was reading the *Luise* aloud, when he came to the description of the wedding, he broke out in tears and exclaimed: "A sacred passage!" with an inwardness which sent a thrill through all the circle.

Goethe had a special reason for raising marriage to such an extraordinarily high and sacred plane both in the picture and in direct utterances of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften.* He wished to exert a certain influence, and he knew that in order to produce an effect one must express his views in extreme terms. He wished to build up a mighty wall against the lax conception of marriage which, for more than a generation, had been generally accepted in life and in literature among the upper classes of the nation, and which had been brought into special prominence, and made a source of special danger, by the romanticists.

Perhaps the immediate occasion of his sermon may be found in the need which he felt of replying to the frivolous words, veiled in the glittering appearance of profundity, in which Friedrich Schlegel, in the *Athenäum* of 1798, sought to justify the habits of life of the romanticists by giving a theory in their support. "Almost all marriages," we read there, "are merely left-handed marriages, or rather provisional attempts and distant approaches to genuine marriage, the real nature of which consists in several per-

* *Cf.* his letter to Schubarth of the 7th of November, 1821.

sons becoming but one. . . . For this very reason caprice, which doubtless may have something to say when it is a question of whether one desires to be an individual by one's self or merely an integrant part of a common personality, should here be limited as little as possible, and one cannot see what sound objections could be raised to a marriage *à quatre.*" To this frivolous, swaggering verbiage, puffed up with philosophistical conceit, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* gives a sound answer engraved in a shaft of granite.

Goethe knew very well that in this answer he was castigating himself. He too had allowed himself to be led by the spirit of the times, and occasionally by his own passions, —as only recently in his relation to Minna Herzlieb—to transgress the bounds which reverence for marriage demanded he should not transgress. This self-flagellation was very welcome to him. In order to be able to lay on the lash the more heavily he caricatured the weak side of himself in the personality of Eduard, whereas he gave the Captain his stronger side. Even then the Captain had to be supported by the gentle hand of Charlotte, in whom Goethe has erected a monument to Frau von Stein which makes her the peer of Iphigenia, Leonora d'Este, and Natalie.

The self-flagellation for the past was at the same time a self-warning for the future, which was still necessary. Although at the time of the completion of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* the poet was entering his seventh decade, because of his power of fascination and his inflammability he was still exposed to very many temptations from within and without. The novel had hardly appeared in print when he wrote from Jena to Frau von Stein (May 11, 1810): "During the last few months I have been free from pain, it is true, so that, according to the teaching of Epicurus, I have no ground for complaint, and yet a constant balancing of our physical and moral conduct is always a burdensome matter." We observe how he was again forced to preserve his equilibrium toward a fair lady. It was no longer

Minna, who was far away in Züllichau; it was very probably the fascinating Silvie von Ziegesar, who lived in the neighbouring town of Drakendorf.

The more Goethe gained control over himself, the less insight we gain into the conflicts which rage within him. But we may divine them.

Schärfe deine kräft'gen Blicke!
Hier durchſchaue dieſe Bruſt,
Sieh der Lebenswunden Tücke,
Sieh der Liebeswunden Luſt!*

"Learn to forgo," the poet calls to us in the *West-östlicher Divan*, to give us an idea of what a hard struggle his life was. He fought the good fight and came off conqueror. He killed self and rose to life. He learned by experience that to him who forgoes are opened the gates of life; to him who rushes madly after desire, the gates of death. What he learned he sought to teach others. Hence all the great works of his maturer years culminate in the plea for resignation,—not idle, but active resignation.

* Sharpen now thy mighty glances,
Search my breast with surest sight;
See the scars of life's keen lances,
See the love-wounds' deep delight.

XIII

PANDORA

Reason for writing *Pandora*—Origin—History of composition—Goethe's conception of beauty—Pandora—Prometheus—Epimetheus—Pandora's box—Epimeleia—Phileros—Phileros's crime and its punishment—Epimeleia's history—Pandora's character—Prometheus and Epimetheus—The fire—Its beneficent effect—The new day—Plan of the projected continuation—Pandora's return due to young generation—Contents of her box—Work, science, and art—The *Kypsele*—War over it—Pandora brings peace—Epimetheus's youth renewed—The whole poem a chain of songs.

WE now turn back to the period in which *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* originated. The Duchy of Weimar, central and northern Germany were still bleeding from the wounds of the war. The whole fatherland, being under French suzerainty, did obeisance to the will of the French Emperor, uncertain whether or not he would again exercise his might in shaping the fate of individuals and countries. A rude, hard age had dawned. Peace, quiet, harmony, and beauty had gone out of life. Would they ever return? Men asked this question complainingly, and those who complained and asked most, and turned their eyes most longingly to heaven, were the numerous educated class, those who had little to occupy them, and who had hitherto thought their comfortable artistic and scientific enjoyment safe-guarded, but were now cruelly aroused from their esthetic dream-life.

Pandora, the fair goddess, who comprised within herself everything beautiful, had taken leave of them. To console them Goethe sang the song of *Pandorens Wiederkunft*, (Pandora's return), as the original title read. While singing

this song he pursued at the same time broader and more general aims. The people could not have lost beauty out of their lives if they had had a right conception of it. Hence his chief task was to give them a revelation of beauty in its true greatness. The song of Pandora's return was, then, not merely a charming dream of hope, which the poet conjured up before longing souls; its symbolism was to be in the future a never failing fountain of encouragement and enlightenment for all who should come to it to drink and to carry away hope to other thirsty souls.

While Goethe was singing this song of songs for others he sang it also for himself. True, he had possessed since early youth a clear insight into the nature of beauty, but he had not infrequently allowed its image to become obscured by the spirit of the times and by passion, and had found again its uplifting power only when he had fought his way back to clearness of vision. He had rapidly recovered from the tendencies of the age, but passion had refracted the pure light of beauty and thus destroyed its sanctifying effect. It was love for Minna Herzlieb that had so seriously disturbed his equilibrium. From the confusion and threatening danger inherent in this love he sang himself free in *Pandora*, and by going back to the fundamental essence of the beautiful he transformed his love into a reposeful enjoyment of sorrow and into energetic creation.

Thus in the course of the year 1807 there collected in his mind a series of motives which made a poem of the nature of *Pandora* a moral necessity. A favourable coincidence gave these motives their definite form and direction. Two young friends, Leo von Seckendorf and Doctor Stoll, wished to publish a new periodical under the title *Prometheus*, with the purpose in view of "making human beauty flourish upon the earth."

They asked our poet for a contribution, and with that these motives crystallised about the Prometheus-myth. At the same time that the young friends presented their request (at the end of October, 1807), Goethe received

from Schelling an address, in which Schelling gave a clear and thoughtful exposition of what might be called the principles underlying Goethe's views on the nature of the beautiful.[71] Then the current of the new poem burst forth quickly from a full and clear source. As early as the 11th of November Goethe communicated his plan to Riemer on the way to Jena. The atmosphere of Jena was in every respect favourable to the growth of the composition. From the 21st of November to the 2d of December, the days when he worked with special diligence on the poem, it was particularly easy for him to fancy himself in the place of Epimetheus longing for Pandora, because during these days he held himself aloof from his beloved almost altogether. On the 1st of December Werner arrived, and Goethe's smouldering passion burst into flames. Quiet work was disturbed, and, after a few futile attempts, was not again resumed until May of the following year in Karlsbad, where the poem assumed the form in which we possess it to-day. It ends at the point where Pandora's return is announced and is expected in the near future. Goethe left the poem a fragment for the time being in order to turn his attention to *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, which had been knocking more and more urgently at the door of his workshop. So far as *Pandora* was to contain any personal experience of the poet, this was all included in the part already finished and he had only a subdued interest in the purely didactic part. Furthermore, the chief contemporary interest lay wholly in the first part. From the manner in which Goethe spoke of a temporary interruption of the composition, and conducted himself with regard to it, it is obvious that he had even then as good as given up a continuation.

In *Pandora* Goethe entered a field which had been especially attractive and instructive to him since early youth, and he had recast the material time and again, according to the needs and views which at that time occupied his soul. As a youth he had been charmed by the heroism of the Titan, who in the consciousness of his own

creative power bade defiance even to the gods; as a mature man he ventured to follow in the footsteps of Æschylus and undertake a *Prometheus Bound* and *Unbound*, the few remnants of which are, to be sure, insufficient to serve as a basis upon which to conjecture the plot which he planned. In the drama of 1773 he had made Pandora, contrary to the antique legend, the daughter of Prometheus; in the festival play of 1807 he returned to tradition, representing her as a goddess, who comes down from heaven among men, and is received by Epimetheus. In both cases he throws aside the antique characterisation of Pandora as a beautiful woman who brings all sorts of evil on mankind. She is beautiful, it is true, but beauty can only strengthen, uplift, and bless mankind.

The poet himself tells us that Pandora is the symbol of beauty [72]; but we must give the word "beauty" the broad sense in which he meant it. To him beauty is the manifestation of truth and of universal law, of the idea and of the reality of things. He uses all these expressions interchangeably. But what are truth and law, "which enter into phenomena with the greatest freedom and on their own conditions," what is the idea, "which is eternal and unique," what the reality of things, but God? It is Goethe's deepest conviction that beauty is the manifestation of God. He uses this most exalted word unwillingly, for fear that most people may understand something entirely different from what he means. In the presence of Greek masterpieces, however, his enthusiasm draws from him the confession: "These great works of art are at the same time the highest works of nature, produced by man in accordance with true and natural laws; . . . here is necessity, here is God."* For this reason Epimetheus protests firmly against the characterisation of Pandora as a creature of Hephæstus, a god of a lower order. He calls it a mythical error, adding that she is one of the celestials, a sister of Zeus, and hence, like him, one of the highest gods. In accordance with this exalted nature, the effect of her ap-

* Vol. i, p. 404.

pearance, in spite of all the charms with which she is adorned, is "almost terrifying."

By virtue of the fact that Pandora represents the Deity in her person, and, as a personification of original beauty, manifests the phenomena, not only of beauty, but also of truth and conformity to law, she is the mother, both of the sciences, which seek the truth with the understanding, and of the arts, which represent it to the senses.[73] Whoever desires to accomplish anything permanent in art or science, must find the way to truth. By finding the way to truth he will find the way to God. Hence, according to Goethe's opinion, the man who possesses* science and art has at the same time religion. Likewise, he who perceives beauty (truth) feels a thrill of sacred emotion. He feels in harmony with himself and the world. Hence in the outline of the continuation of our poem, after the appearance of Pandora we read: "Beauty, piety, repose."

Unless one allows one's self to be sanctified by art and science, and in their service lays off all selfishness and forgets self entirely, one produces works that are a benefit to the ego of the author, but not to mankind, works that produce a momentary effect, but not a lasting one, works which have the outward appearance of truth and beauty, but not their substance. The morally good is inseparably connected with the beautiful and the true.[74]

Pandora is, then, the representative of the morally good, as well as of the true and the beautiful. She guides to eternal beauty and eternal goodness. She requites only love and goodness. With art and science she brings down the fear of God and the service of God. In other words, she brings all the higher culture, all the real beauty of life.

All the beauty in the life of mankind is a gift of the gods. It is not an absolutely free gift, however; it is only shown to us. We must acquire it in order to possess it

*"Possesses" (*besitzt*) is here used in the same pregnant sense as in *Faust* II, 6822 f.:

Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast,
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.—C

as our very own, and we can acquire it only through a sense worthy of it. This is one of the leading motives of the finished part of *Pandora.*

Pandora comes down upon the earth and is rejected by Prometheus. He needs no beauty, no abstract science, no philosophy, no religion; he needs strength, will-power, action. The world depends upon work and the point of the sword. Craftsmen and warriors are his beloved companions, whom he guides according to his purposes with the energy peculiar to him alone. It is different with his brother Epimetheus. His mind is fixed on the ideals of life; the momentary, the tangible, the visible, the merely expedient, do not satisfy him; he is athirst for beauty and love, and indulges in gloomy meditations. One might give him the world for his own possession and he would not be satisfied, if it were not filled with beauty and love, and if he could not fathom the intimate connection of its parts. Hence he receives with joy and marries the goddess who seems to bring such gifts.

Pandora has brought with her a box, out of which flutter all kinds of lovely images of gods. He does not reach after them, for he has Pandora, who stands higher in his estimation than all these ethereal forms. But just as the people are mistaken who believe that one need only reach after these images in order to have them, so is Epimetheus mistaken in Pandora. Instead of binding her to himself by means of action, he gives himself up to enjoying her. He is an excellent example of the inactive, visionary *bel esprit,* such as Germany possessed in great numbers, and Goethe had painted in Wilhelm Meister. He is delicate and pure in his sentiments, full of enthusiasm for everything noble and beautiful, but merely receptive, not productive. He does not look beyond his ego and is fully satisfied, if this ego revels in most refined enjoyment. The treasures of beauty cannot be truly gained in this way. Hence after a short married life Pandora returns to heaven.

Epimetheus now sees himself face to face with nothing,

and naturally falls into pessimism. "Eternal night were better!" "No light can ever human paths illuminate." What Goethe had once admonished Fritz Jacobi to do, to look into his hands, which God had filled with power and every kind of art, Prometheus shows Epimetheus by his example. In vain. Weak Epimetheus loses himself in memory, broods fruitlessly over the past, watches through the night, and sleeps through the day. And yet Pandora has not left him all alone; for he is made of noble stuff, which it was worth while to preserve for the gods. She leaves behind with him a daughter, Epimeleia, that is, care for others and loving devotion to them. Perhaps Epimetheus may learn through her to come out of himself and to devote himself to action, action for others, as Wilhelm Meister learned through his Felix. As yet, however, there is no sign of this, although half a generation has passed since the disappearance of Pandora, and Epimeleia has matured to young womanhood. He is still the same, thinking only of himself and finding torment and refreshment in memory. In this self-absorption he has failed to observe that Epimeleia has found a lover in Phileros, the son of Prometheus. Phileros, who has often stolen to her hut in the night, appears there again before the dawn of the day on which the action of the drama takes place. He meets Epimetheus, whom he requests not to block his way to his unnamed beloved. Epimetheus turns away and lies down again on his couch without any suspicion. The moment that, wearied by his long night's watch, he at last falls asleep, Prometheus steps forth for a new day of vigorous work. With his pleasure in creation he does not await the rising of the sun. As Helios as yet gives him no light, a torch is called into service.

Tag vor dem Tage! Göttlich werde du verehrt!
Denn aller Fleiß, der männlich ſchätzenswerteſte,
Iſt morgendlich.*

*Day before day! Be thou revered as though a god!
For industry, the noblest known to human kind,
Still loves the morn.

Such are his sentiments,—exactly those of Goethe, with whom the morning hours were favoured and the most fruitful of all for work. Prometheus calls his smiths to work. What he with their help accomplishes is, to be sure, only mechanical, practical work, but it is useful and it affords him joy. It is useful not alone to him and his labourers, but to all; just as everything that is created redounds to the good of all, independently of the will and purpose of the creator. In so far there is something social even about work; but Prometheus is also a social nature in his thought. It is his desire to be of use to others, and he is glad to give them of the products of his labour. Thus to the shepherds, who pass by, he gives tools, weapons, and shawms, for their protection and amusement. He rejoices that the shepherds go away peaceful and happy; but he knows that war, eternal war, and not peace, is the destined lot of man. Therefore he calls upon his smiths to forge weapons above all. "Then ye have created everything." We hear an echo of the Napoleonic era.

He now discovers his sleeping brother, and looks on him with loving eyes. This enhances the character of Prometheus in our estimation. The rude man of toil, who in the last resort appeals to arms, has nevertheless a tender heart, and there is reason to hope that such a tree will put forth a perfect branch. He cannot praise his brother's conduct, but he knows his noble, heaven-centred heart, and so feels genuine sympathy for him in his melancholy, which he at present imputes only to his brooding over the hardness of life. And yet he sees in his pain an educational element.

Zu dulden iſt! Sei's tätig oder leidend auch.*

Hardly has he withdrawn when Epimetheus is aroused from his slumbers by a piercing cry for help from Epimeleia, who is pursued by Phileros with raised axe and receives a wound in the neck. Then Epimetheus also calls for help, and immediately Prometheus appears and seizes his son with an iron hand. He is indignant that Phileros has

* If active or if passive, man must suffer pain.

resorted to arms in the peaceful region where disputes are decided by law. He condemns his son without asking any further questions about the grounds of his conduct. The evil of taking the law into one's own hands is obvious in itself; but it is a beautiful evidence of the degree of moral culture to which father and son have attained that the father lays the punishment in the son's own hands. He gives him his liberty in the words: "Thou mayst repent, or deal thyself thy punishment." Phileros at last breaks his silence. He excuses his action on the ground that he caught his beloved playing him false and punished her for ner deception. Now that he has lost her, life has no longer any charms for him; he will seek death. With that he hastens away. Prometheus seems to look upon the last words as merely the painful ravings of an over-heated fancy, which will not likely soon be carried out in action, and so makes no attempt to hold him back.

Epimeleia now gives her father and uncle her explanation of how Phileros came to accuse her. In an entrancing song glowing with warmest feeling she recounts the beginning of her love and the events of the past night. She tells how an insolent shepherd had stolen through the garden gate, which she had left open for Phileros, and how he had embraced her, in spite of her efforts to prevent him, just at the moment when Phileros entered. Phileros, without waiting for an explanation, had rushed madly at the shepherd and had killed him, and then had rushed at her. After having given her account with throbbing heart she hastens away overcome with grief.

Prometheus is more affected by Epimeleia's personality than by her story. Before saying a word about what has just happened, he asks who the girl is, and now learns for the first time—which strikes us as very remarkable—that on Pandora's arrival Epimetheus not only received her, but married her, and that Epimeleia is their daughter. Epimetheus has kept this secret from Prometheus in order to avoid a quarrel with him. We now listen to a long stichomythia between the two brothers concerning Pan-

dora's splendour. Only her outward beauty has hitherto impressed itself upon Prometheus, but Epimetheus describes her inward worth, which causes her to appear as the highest good, the goddess uniting in her personality everything that is noble. At first Prometheus disapproves his brother's sorrow over the loss of Pandora, but he gradually learns to appreciate it more and more. The inspired hymns of Epimetheus, his sympathetic, touching account of his happiness in love and of the final parting, do not fail to affect Prometheus. But when he probes deeper and deeper into his sorrow, Prometheus calls to him to compose himself ("tears disfigure the eyes of a greybeard"), and to throw himself into action; for flames are bursting forth from his houses and his forests.

The companions of the slain shepherd have sought vengeance by breaking in and hurling firebrands into Epimetheus's houses. It becomes apparent at once how little help Epimetheus has received, either from happiness or from sorrow, toward overcoming his selfishness.

Was hab ich zu verlieren, da Pandora floh!
Das brenne dort! Viel schöner baut sich's wieder auf.*

His only thought is of his pain; he is not disturbed about those dependent upon him, whether they will be shelterless, whether they are in danger of losing their lives; he does not even think of Epimeleia. She is quite different. She, too, feels unconcerned about her own life and possessions, is even more indifferent than her father, but she spurs others on mightily to help, not so much from consciousness of blame, which she innocently imputes to herself, as from innate public spirit. She may be indifferent toward her own welfare, but not toward the welfare of others, not even in the face of her own death, which she seeks by throwing herself into the flames. Epimetheus, on the contrary, is aroused to action only when he sees Epimeleia in the flames. Then he finally makes an effort to save her and his house. Meanwhile Prometheus has hastened up with

* What, pray, have I to lose, since my Pandora fled?
Then let it burn! 'T will be more beautiful rebuilt.

his warriors. "Give aid to this my neighbour," he commands, and calms the confusion and extinguishes the fire.

As the red glow of the fire fades away a new red light appears in the eastern sky. Eos, the dawn, rises out of the sea and announces the new day. She is followed by Phileros, who had thrown himself from a rock into the sea, but, seized upon in the waters "by life's own pure, unfailing aspiration" and, born anew, had swum swiftly to the shore and saved his life. He steps upon the strand, where he is joyously welcomed as Dionysus by fishermen and vintagers. In the arms of death he has drunk the wine of life and is now prepared to present it to others. On the other side of the scene Epimeleia walks unharmed from the flames. "The day's high celebration, universal joy begins," cries Eos to Prometheus. He is little rejoiced at the announcement, for, as he says, he does not love festivities. "The true man's real festival is action." When Eos further announces new gifts, which are to descend from heaven on this festal day, Prometheus becomes still more displeased. The human race, he says, has enough gifts: the only thing it needs is to make a sensible use of what it has already been given. But, it is true, man lives like a child, from day to day. "Would that they the past might hold more precious, more their own the present make by shaping it." This would be well and would meet his desires. Hereupon Eos parts from him with the significant words:

Groß beginnet ihr Titanen; aber leiten
Zu dem ewig Guten, ewig Schönen,
Ist der Götter Werk; die laßt gewähren.*

Here ends the fragment, or, as we may say with Goethe, the first part of the poem. From the meagre outline which has been preserved of what was to follow we see that the new day is to bring Pandora back to the world. She is to guide the world to eternal good and eternal beauty.

What has taken place, that Pandora should return to

* Great beginnings, Titans proud, ye make; but guiding
To eternal good, eternal beauty,
Is the work of gods; leave that to them.

humanity? This blessing cannot be due to anything that Epimetheus has done. True, he has learned to appreciate the value of deeds and action. He has learned that longing and sentimental dreaming avail nothing, that man without action is in danger of losing his highest and dearest possessions, and that he must get beyond self by means of action and creation. But this dawning of a new revelation, which has as yet hardly been translated into conscious activity, is not in itself sufficient to account for the coming of the new day, the dawning of an era of goodness and beauty, of art and science, and of piety, which finds its expression in creative enthusiasm for all that is high, and in devoted love toward one's neighbour. Neither can Prometheus have brought on this new day; for, although he is engaged in action and loves his neighbours, and although he shows the first stages of appreciation of the ideal, nevertheless in practice he stubbornly resists its influence. One of the men lacks energy and public spirit; the other lacks the longing for beauty.

It must then be the new generation that deserves the credit for bringing about Pandora's return. And such is the case. The one-sidedness of the fathers is overcome in the children. This is true especially of Phileros, the leader of the young generation. He is from the beginning destined and qualified to be the bearer of a new culture that is higher than utilitarianism. He has the energy and determination of his father, and the enthusiasm for the beautiful of his uncle. This last quality is indicated by his name, "lover of Eros." He is a lover, not of the wanton patron of sexual love, but of the god who awakens love for ideal beauty, whether it be revealed in the individual or in the general public, in art or in science, in the state or in society,—the god who begets also an ardent longing to create in the service of ideal beauty—the god Eros depicted by Plato, and the genuine twin brother of Goethe's Pandora.

In Epimeleia we find likewise a promising union of energy and esthetic sense. But both she and Phileros have

yet to stand the highest test, to see whether they are ready to devote themselves entirely to ideal good. They stand the test brilliantly. For the sake of the purity of their souls both march to death and thereby save themselves to life. They give up their existence, in order to be; they die, in order to become. Only when this has taken place and they are united, thus closing the bond of pure, devoted, enthusiastic idealists, eager for real accomplishment, can the new day dawn.

So, vereint in Liebe, doppelt herrlich,
Nehmen sie die Welt auf. Gleich vom Himmel
Senket Wort und Tat sich segnend nieder,
Gabe senkt sich, ungeahnet vormals.*

Worthy as Phileros and Epimeleia are of the new era of the beautiful, even they could not of themselves have called it forth out of nothing. They are, rather, the heirs of transmitted possessions; the labours and aspirations of the older generation, of the industrious generation of Prometheus, had not been in vain. Any work, no matter how purely utilitarian the purpose behind it, develops both art and science, but stops with these two obvious representatives of the divinely beautiful which are expressly mentioned by Goethe in the outline. It develops science out of the striving to produce the useful more and more rapidly and in a form better and better adapted to the purpose. It develops art out of the natural inclination to make the useful pleasing, and out of the discovery that the beautiful is also as a general rule better adapted to the purpose. The results of labour are supplemented by the workings of those desires in man which prompt him to look beyond the immediately practical and the physically useful.

Pandora, as a wise educator of men, arouses these desires by causing to rise out of the box which she has brought

*Thus, in love united, double glory,
Enter they the world. At once from heaven
Word and Deed descend, replete with blessing
Gift descends, aforetime never dreamed of.

with her the images of happy love, riches, power, honour, and influence.[75] By striving after these man makes himself master of the arts and sciences in an ever increasing measure. Then if to this unguided, selfish striving and working of the masses be joined a mind of the leaders fixed on the truly ideal,—here represented by Phileros and Epimeleia—we have art and science in their ideal form. They do not need to be brought to us by a god; and it is very significant that the poet represented it thus in his poem. The box in which the lower idols, happy love, power, etc., were contained, Pandora brought with her; a second vessel, called *Kypsele*, in which art and science are contained, comes floating down itself at the dawn of the new day, before Pandora appears.

In accordance with the dénouement it is Phileros, and no longer Epimetheus, who is contrasted with Prometheus. In the outline we read that Phileros welcomes the *Kypsele*, but Prometheus rejects it. Prometheus doubtless surmises that this vessel contains the divine gifts of which Eos spoke, and recalls how much the former gifts which Pandora brought from heaven threw his people into confusion and kept them from serious work. Furthermore, the fact that as the mysterious chest came floating down it obscured the sun, which was still low in the heavens, may have seemed to him an ill omen. Hence he insists absolutely that this box be put out of sight, and commands his warriors to do it. War is an enemy of the Muses. It is all to no purpose that Epimeleia prophesies everything good and beautiful of the *Kypsele*.

Thus arts and sciences, scarcely acquired, are in danger of being buried beneath the ruins of war. Goethe's contemporaries likewise saw all nobler culture threatened by the Napoleonic wars. At such a critical moment only a god can help. Pandora appears and this appearance of itself paralyses the violent. Beauty, piety, peace, enter,—joyfully received by Phileros, Epimeleia, and Epimetheus; defiantly opposed by Prometheus. But whether, convinced by his brother and his children, he goes over to the side

of Pandora, or stubbornly continues his opposition to her, in any case his followers forsake him and he is overcome. The *Kypsele* now opens of itself. It is a temple, in which the gods of science and art are enthroned. A priesthood is organised for their service, with Phileros and Epimeleia at the head.

The day is fully come. Helios unites his beams with the splendour of Pandora's gifts, and in this double splendour Epimetheus renews his youth. After men by sentiment and action have gained possession of Pandora, have even made her an object of religious worship, the goddess can ascend again to heaven and need appear no more on earth, unless by some chance mankind should lose her gifts. She carries with her up to heaven her old friend Epimetheus, who seems to have developed more and more from an idle dreamer into an aggressive man of action.

In some such way as this we may restore the thought structure of the drama. Although it is a poem of thought, as a whole it contains an uncommon amount of life, and at times even passionate emotion. The figures are not costumed abstractions; they are warm-blooded men with independent life. None of them but the goddesses Eos and Pandora have retained traces of the paleness of the conceptions which they represent. As Goethe both desired and created a plot in itself attractive he was forced at times to sacrifice the necessary sequence of ideas in favour of the necessary sequence of the action. It seems to us nevertheless that the main links in his chain of thought are clearly recognisable.

In the beginning we called the drama a song. Such indeed it is, a song composed of a chain of songs full of dramatic fire. Some of them are genuine songs, even in the matter of form. The most glorious of them are the ballad in which Epimeleia recounts her love, beginning with:

Einig, unverrückt, zuſammenwandernd,
Leuchten ewig ſie herab die Sterne;
Mondlicht überglänzet alle Höhen,

Und im Laube rauſchet Windesfächeln
Und im Fächeln atmet Philomele,
Atmet froh mit ihr der junge Buſen,
Aufgeweckt vom holden Frühlingstraume . . . .

Sternenglanz und Mondes Überſchimmer,
Schattentiefe, Waſſerſturz und Rauſchen
Sind unendlich, endlich unſer Glück nur.

Lieblich, horch! zur feinen Doppellippe
Hat der Hirte ſich ein Blatt geſchaffen,
Und verbreitet früh ſchon durch die Auen
Heitern Vorgeſang mittägiger Heimchen. . . .

Man horchet,
Und wer draußen wandle ſchon ſo frühe? . .
Mädchen möcht' es wiſſen, Mädchen öffnet
Leiſ' den Schalter, lauſcht am Klaff des Schalters. . . *

and the elegy in which Epimetheus recalls his pain at parting:

Wer von der Schönen zu ſcheiden verdammt iſt,
Fliehe mit abgewendetem Blick!
Wie er, ſie ſchauend, im Tiefſten entflammt iſt,
Zieht ſie, ach! reißt ſie ihn ewig zurück. †

* Stars united, fixed, revolve together
Sending down to earth their light eternal;
All the summits bask in moonlight splendour,
Murm'ring leaves are fanned by zephyrs' pinions;
Philomela breathes the zephyrs' fanning,
Happy breathes with her the youthful bosom,
Waking from the charming dream of springtime. . . .

Light of stars, the moon's all-flooding splendour,
Depth of shadows, waterfall, and rustling
Know no end; 't is only joy that endeth.

Hark, how lovely! Of a leaf the shepherd
Hath a double lip melodious fashioned,
And across the morning meadows floateth
Cheerful prelude to the cricket's chirping . . .

She harkens;
And who wanders there without so early? . . .
Maiden longs to know and maiden opens
Shutters softly; at the gap she listens. . . .

† He who is doomed from fair maiden to part,
Quick let him flee with his eyes turned away;

If one were to place these songs, with their splendour and warmth, among the rest of Goethe's lyrics, the more modest and more subdued of the latter would run the risk of being crowded into the background as cold and colourless. One is astonished at the abundance of poetic power which the poet had at his disposal. It seems as though ingenious word combinations, pictures, thoughts, emotions, rhythms flooded his soul. The artistic form of classicism celebrates in *Pandora* its greatest triumphs; it has poured out upon the whole poem an almost inconceivable splendour.

When we consider that at the time when Goethe was writing this drama he produced the cycle of sonnets and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, we are reminded of his saying that men of genius experience a renewal of their youth. He usually experienced it through love. But to him love was made truly fruitful only by renunciation. He developed his greatest creative power, not in the storm of passion, but after the storm had spent its rage and there was nothing left of passion but the ideal core, the fire which in its purity no longer consumes, but fuses all the noble metals deposited in the inner soul.

In the first sonnet we read of the wave:

Sie ſchwankt und ruht, zum See zurückgedeichet;
Geſtirne, ſpiegelnd ſich, beſchaun das Blinken
Des Wellenſchlags am Fels, ein neues Leben.*

Seeing her, love fills the depths of his heart,
Back she then draws him and holds him for aye.

*It sways and rests, a lake by dikes created;
And then reflecting stars within the sparkle
Of rock-dashed, foaming spray new life discover.

XIV

FROM 1808 TO 1815

Death of Goethe's mother—Hostility of the French Government toward Weimar—Goethe concerning the Duke's actions—The Congress of Erfurt—Goethe at the Congress—The Théâtre Français—Goethe and Napoleon—Napoleon and Wieland—Both poets receive the Cross of the Legion of Honour—Goethe's impressions of Napoleon—Sixtieth birthday—*Farbenlehre* completed—Journey to Karlsbad—Teplitz—Louis Bonaparte—Dresden—Return to Weimar—Goethe absorbed in the Theatre—*Philipp Hackert—Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert—Dichtung und Wahrheit*—The Emperor of Austria and the Empress of France in Karlsbad in 1812—The Empress of Austria in Teplitz—*Die Wette*—Beethoven—Napoleon's Russian campaign—The Prussian uprising—Goethe's attitude toward foreign domination—German customs not jeopardised—French respect for German literature and science—Goethe and the War of Liberation—Goethe and Prussia—Goethe's political error—The wisdom of his silence—His true calling—The judgment of his contemporaries—His patriotism—His belief in the future of Germany—1813—Goethe depressed—Journey to Teplitz—Third volume of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—Return to Weimar—Battle of Leipsic—Siege of Erfurt—Goethe's son August plans to enlist as a volunteer—Goethe's objections—End of the war—*Des Epimenides Erwachen.*

WHEN Goethe gained the mastery over his passion for Minna Herzlieb the lovely, soulful maiden became to him a star on whose beauty he feasted his soul from afar. Desire subsided, and he lived on with no unrest or sorrow to disturb his peace and serenity. Thus we find him in the year 1808. The year culminated in his long sojourn in Karlsbad, where maidens and young married women swarmed about him with sparkling eyes,—

Wie des Goldſchmieds Bazarlädchen
Vielgefärbt geſchliff'ne Lichter,

So umgeben hübſche Mädchen
Den beinah ergrauten Dichter—*

and where pleasure in work, facility in production, and physical comfort kept him in the best of humour. "I feel very happy here," he confessed in a letter. "There were many coincidences which reminded us [he refers to Bury, who was visiting him there] of former days [spent together in Rome], the hot weather and my cheerfulness, which in the intervening time he had not been accustomed to find in me," we read in another letter.

Unfortunately Goethe's life after his return to Weimar did not prove a continuation of the joy of the spring and summer spent in Karlsbad.

As he entered his festively decorated house he received the news of the death of his mother. She had passed away on the 13th of September at the age of seventy-eight. Goethe was completely prostrated by the news, as we are told by his brother-in-law Vulpius. He had not seen his beloved mother for eleven years. Warlike disturbances, illnesses, and necessary sojourns at watering-places had constantly kept him from journeying toward the west. His mother recognised these hindrances and never uttered a word of complaint about his not coming to visit her. On the contrary, she suppressed her yearning to see him, lest she might occasion him some inconvenience or over-exertion. She was happy when he was happy, and when he produced beautiful works and people spoke well of him.

She had, besides, her dear Lord, on whom she relied in all vicissitudes, her many friends, who bestowed great affection upon her, and her great inward treasures, which often made solitude seem to her a thing to be desired. When alone she would give herself up to her fancy, to her deep, serene meditations, to running over in memory the works of her son, and she became wholly insensible to the

* As around the goldsmith's cases
Jewels' colour-splendours play,
So do pretty maidens' faces
Round the poet almost gray.

flight of time. Such delicious self-entertainment she called "unbracing the soul." She said further: "My friends cannot understand how such a woman as I can spend her lonely hours in this way. Their souls, which are unbraced the whole day long, as is very evident from their conversation, have necessarily no conception of 'unbracing.'"

Her most cherished hours were those devoted to her son, and it afforded her special pleasure to recount with motherly pride to her little house friend Bettina all the wonderful things of her Wolf's childhood and youth. This vine put out many a strange tendril in the sensitive heart of her imaginative listener. The mother's last great pleasure was when her son wrote her from Karlsbad how well he was. "Thy letter refreshed me and gave me great joy. Yes, yes, we shall again plant vineyards upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit thereof. So often as I receive any good news from thee all the promises stored up in my heart come to life." At the close of the same letter she says of the first volume of the new edition of his collected works, the volume containing the poems: "It never leaves my side. If I were to tell thee everything that gives me heavenly delight, I should have to copy out the whole volume. . . . Hold ever dear thy happy and true mother." The same tones ring through her letter to him of July 1st, the last that has been preserved: "Thy works have come to hand. All the eight volumes are at the bookbinder's, and are being most beautifully bound in half morocco, as goes without saying for such masterpieces. Thy dear letter of the 22nd of June was to me another lovely, comforting, glorious message."

Having been spared from physical ailments, she remained hale and happy, and was able to walk about until her last illness. When she was finally stricken down, she forbade the sending of news of her condition to her son, and when she felt the approach of death, she arranged for her funeral in her own original way with as much composure and exactness as though it were a question of a party which she intended to give in the near future. She even re-

membered to give strict orders that there should not be too few raisins in the cake for the burial feast. "I never in all my life have been able to endure such a thing."

Great as was Goethe's sorrow over the death of his mother, it was not his nature to give himself up to grief; nor would such a thing have been possible under the circumstances. Immediately after his return there thundered about him a "stormy Court and world uproar," the exciting, noisy prelude to the great congress of princes, which the French Emperor had summoned to Erfurt, and which would probably bring Napoleon, and certainly the Czar of Russia, together with their brilliant suites, to Weimar. Necessarily Weimar's future depended largely upon this meeting of the emperors, and the people of the duchy were not a little anxious about the approaching significant days, both from the point of view of politics and of the festivities.

The attitude of the French Government toward the duchy had been by no means friendly of late. They surmised, and not wrongly, that the Duke was a secret enemy of French suzerainty, and some of his actions had aroused the suspicion that he wished to make Weimar the centre of an anti-French movement within the Rhenish Confederation. He had appointed discharged Prussian officers to positions in the service of the Weimar State and Court, and had loaned General Blücher four thousand thalers. In the spring the French authorities of Erfurt, which France had kept for herself after the defeat of Prussia, in order to have a fortified watch station in the heart of Germany, had communicated their complaints and warnings to the Duke through Legation Councillor Falk. Falk informed Goethe and the news aroused the poet's most violent anger.* "Pray, what would these Frenchmen have?" he exclaimed. "That the Duke supports wounded Prussian officers, who have been robbed of their pay, that he advanced heroic Blücher four thousand thalers after the battle of Lübeck,—

* It must have been on the 9th of May, for on that day Goethe made the entry in his diary: "In the evening Meyer and Falk: about French presumptions and injustices."

that you would call a conspiracy? That you would construe to his discredit? Let us suppose that to-day or to-morrow some misfortune should happen to your Grand Army: I wonder how valuable in the eyes of the Emperor a general or field marshal would be who acted exactly as our Duke has acted in the present case? I tell you it is right for the Duke to act as he does. He must act so. He would do very wrong if he ever acted otherwise. Even if he should lose his country and his people, his crown and his sceptre, as did his ancestor the unfortunate Johann, he may not, he must not depart a hand's-breadth from his noble-mindedness and from his plain duty in such cases as a man and a prince."* According to Falk, Goethe said many other things in his excitement; among them, that if his lord should be deposed he himself would sing a song of Germany's disgrace, which would restore the Duke to his throne, and would snatch the French usurper from his seat, etc.; but this seems to have been added later by the author to adorn his tale.

Suffice it to say, there was ill feeling between Weimar and the French, which, under certain circumstances, would have been fraught with great danger. But as the Czar of Russia was the brother of the Hereditary Princess of Weimar, and as Napoleon had at the present moment every reason to show consideration to the Czar, it was possible to look forward to the Congress with some degree of assurance.

On the 24th of September the Grand Duke Constantin arrived; on the following day, the Czar Alexander. On the 27th they journeyed on to Erfurt, whither the Duke had also gone. Beside the two emperors, there were assembled four kings, thirty-four princes, and a large number of courtiers, generals, and ministers. The little city was suddenly filled with busiest life, which received an added artistic charm through the performances given by the actors of the Théâtre Français, with the famous Talma at their head.

* Falk, *Goethe aus näherm persönlichen Umgange dargestellt*, Leipsic, 1832, p. 117 f.—C.

Behind the curtain of the noisy festivities the two emperors were deciding the fate of Europe.

According to Privy Councillor of Legation, later Chancellor, von Müller, who was a member of the Duke's suite, Goethe, "owing to his peculiar disposition," held himself aloof from the Congress at first, although the Duke had at the outset laid before him the desirability of his attendance. However, when the Duke expressly requested him to appear, he yielded to the desire of his lord, and on the 29th of September went to witness the brilliant assemblage of princes. His poetic eye and his artistic interest found there much to occupy them. The international throng of mighty personages of great fame, or at least of high position, was assembled in a region with which he was well acquainted. How often during the seventies he had been the guest of Stadtholder von Dalberg in quiet Erfurt, and how many happy and serious hours he had spent there! But everything was then so small, so narrow, so gentle and calm. The history of the world, and especially of Germany, was still dawdling along in worn-out slippers. It had now taken on a swift, rumbling, iron tread. The poet could not have obtained a clear conception of the rapid march of events, and of the tremendous change in the map of Europe, which followed, in any better way than by viewing in this old, familiar setting that unique spectacle with a former French lieutenant of artillery as its commanding central figure. Goethe's old patron, Dalberg, was also present as prince primate of Germany and ruler of Frankfort. The free imperial city seemed consigned to the grave for ever. In his outline of a description of those days Goethe condensed his deep impressions into these few jesting words: "The old familiar locality and a new personnel."

Along with the playing of the actors on the world stage, that of the professional Parisian players in the theatre afforded him an extraordinary pleasure. "It was most interesting," says von Müller, "to hear him at the Duke's quarters after every performance speak for hours about the peculiarities of French tragedians and dramatic artists.

While speaking he was always in a state of the highest excitement, was full of fire and entrancing eloquence." He doubtless drew comparisons between the French and the Weimar stage, and not to the disadvantage of the latter; for, with all his appreciation of the admirable performances of the French, he did not fail to see the exaggerated mannerism which had become their style.

On the 1st of October Napoleon learned through Minister Maret of Goethe's presence, and, in spite of the fact that he himself was overcrowded with business and other appointments, commanded the poet to appear at an audience with him at eleven o'clock the following morning. Thus were to be brought face to face the two greatest men of Europe, both world-conquerors, both men of superhuman power. The one, born with a divine sense of proportion, which he was constantly strengthening by earnest self-discipline, had transformed this superhuman power into grateful, reposeful beauty and wisdom; the other had given it free course to manifest itself, now as a volcanic eruption, destroying everything in its course, now as a violent agent of stupendous construction.

When Goethe entered, the French Emperor gazed at him long and attentively, then exclaimed with admiration: "*Voilà* (or *vous êtes*) *un homme!*" Goethe was no stranger to him; he had formed an excellent idea of him from *Werther*, which he had read seven times. The poet's personal appearance, however, seemed to surpass his expectations. He did not enter at once into a discussion of *Werther;* he inquired first about Goethe's dramas. In this connection Daru, who was present, mentioned the fact that Goethe had translated Voltaire's *Mahomet.* "That is not a good play," replied the Emperor, and then gave a very detailed exposition of how improper it is that the great world-conqueror should be made to give such an unfavourable description of himself. After that he turned the conversation to *Werther*, and Goethe now learned for the first time that Napoleon was one of his readers. He made various ingenious remarks: among others, that Goethe had weakened the impression

of Werther's overpowering love by mingling the suicide motive with that of offended ambition. In addition he pointed out a certain passage[76] (never definitely indicated by Goethe, and hence difficult to discover), and said: "Why did you do that? It is not natural"; and gave extended reasons for this criticism, which were "perfectly just."

"I listened to him," says Goethe, in his brief incomplete sketch of the interview, "with serene face, and answered, with a pleased smile, that I did not know, to be sure, whether any one else had made this same criticism; but I considered it entirely just, and confessed that there was something untrue to be found in this passage. But, I added, perhaps the author is to be pardoned if he employs a not easily detected artifice in order to produce certain effects, which he could not have achieved in a simple, natural way. The Emperor seemed to be satisfied with this explanation, came back to the drama, and made some very significant remarks, such as one would make who had studied the tragic stage, as a judge studies a criminal, with the closest attention, and had felt very keenly the departure of the French theatre from nature and truth. Then he spoke also of fatalistic dramas with disapproval, saying that they belonged to a darker age. 'What will they do with fate now?' he said—'politics is fate.'"

Here he interrupted the conversation for a time, in order to speak with Daru and Soult about political matters. Turning again to Goethe, he asked him about his personal circumstances, about the members of the House of Weimar, and other things. "I answered him in a natural way. He seemed satisfied, but translated it into his own idiom, a somewhat more decided style than I had at my command." The Emperor was in the best of humour, praised Goethe repeatedly, and by his witticisms forced the poet to laugh aloud, so that he felt obliged to apologise. After the audience had lasted about an hour Goethe was dismissed.

Soon there was to be an opportunity for another interview. Napoleon invited himself to visit the Duke of Weimar on the 6th of October, and to celebrate his presence sent

thither his actors, who now played Voltaire's *La Mort de César* on Goethe's stage—a constellation such as the poet had never dreamed of. At Cæsar's words:

> Je sais combattre, vaincre et ne sais point punir.
> Allons, n'écoutons point ni soupçons ni vengeance,
> Sur l'univers soumis régnons sans violence—*

a deep stir went through the house. Some saw therein the picture of Napoleon, others wished they might see it.

After the theatre there was a ball. Napoleon soon drew the poet to his side, and speaking of the performance said that the serious drama should be the school of princes and peoples, for in a certain sense it stands higher than history. "You ought to write a *Death of Cæsar*, but in a grander style than Voltaire. The world should be shown how Cæsar would have made it happy, if he had been given time to realise his high-minded plans. You come to Paris. I demand it of you, by all means. There you will have a broader view of the world. You will there find an overabundance of material for your poems."

The Emperor also paid some attention to Wieland. He conversed with him for some time in a clever and often pertinent way about political subjects; about the historical work of Tacitus, which he considered highly coloured, written from a narrow point of view, and psychologically lacking; about the propagation of Christianity by the Greeks and about Christianity itself, which he considered the best of all philosophies, because it assures in equal measure the happiness of states and of individuals.

A few days later each of the poets received the Cross of the Legion of Honour. The Emperor was also very gracious toward the country. He relieved the Weimar contingent from the campaign in Spain, and gave the city of Jena three hundred thousand francs indemnity to cover the losses suffered in the battle. Just how much this action on the part of Napoleon was due to his consideration for Czar

* Full well can I wage war, can conquer, but not punish.
To vengeance and mistrust let us a deaf ear lend,
And o'er the conquered world our gentle rule extend.

Alexander, how much to his calculation that the impression he made upon the leading writers of the nation would necessarily be communicated to the nation itself, and, finally, how much he was influenced by true admiration and sympathy, for the Duchess as well as others, is difficult to decide. It is probable that all these motives entered into his determination.

At any rate Weimar was filled with joy. Such a complete change after two years, such splendour after such misery, surpassed all expectation. And what an outlook for the future, with Napoleon the friend of the country and the friend of the Muses! Weimar seemed to rise Phoenix-like from its ashes. "Napoleon is our saint," wrote Minister von Voigt shortly after the gala days.

Goethe shared in the general rejoicing in his own way. He had had a very exalted conception of Napoleon's genius before; but he had not expected that this genius would ever unfold itself so amiably and richly before him. This enhanced extraordinarily his favourable idea of the great personality. The world-conqueror, before whom the princes of Europe bowed, spoke with him and with Wieland as with his peers. "I have never seen a calmer, simpler, gentler, more unassuming man," declared Wieland. Napoleon did not speak as a general and a statesman, but as a literary critic, an historian, a philosopher. And with what sagacity, what discrimination, what originality! He had been obliged to grasp and comprehend everything at a glance. What a mind! "The greatest understanding the world has ever seen" (Goethe to Boisserée, August 8, 1815). And this tremendous personality now stepped up to Goethe and showed him the highest honour. "*Voilà un homme!*" Napoleon had said of him.[77] Goethe could not ask anything more than the recognition contained in these words, coming from such a mouth. He declared too that Napoleon had put the dot above the *i* (of his life). To Cotta he wrote: "I will gladly confess that nothing higher and more pleasing could have happened to me in all my life than to have stood before the French Emperor on such

a footing. Without entering into the details of our conversation, I may say that I have never before been so received by one of higher rank; he accepted me for what I was, and with especial confidence, and he gave me to understand in no uncertain terms that my nature was congenial to him." Goethe felt very certain that if he should ever again meet the Emperor he would find in him a friendly and gracious lord. This he considered a thing greatly to be desired, and not merely for his own sake.

With fresh courage he took up his work again, devoting himself during the following year (1809) especially to *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. In order not to be disturbed while recasting the novel, and at the same time to avoid the inconveniences which might possibly arise for guests at the Bohemian watering-places, as a result of the war which had broken out between Austria and France, he gave up his accustomed yearly sojourn at Karlsbad. He celebrated his sixtieth birthday very quietly in Jena. The occasion served to remind him that it was time to begin his autobiography, which for some time he had had under consideration. As soon as he had finished *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, he began the preparatory studies for the great work. He was unable, however, to make any very rapid progress on it until he had put the last hand to his *Farbenlehre*, which he did the following spring (1810), after having worked at it for twenty years.

With a sigh of relief he set out in the middle of May for his favourite watering-place, and remained in Karlsbad almost three months, where he passed the time agreeably in the society of many distinguished men and women. Among the women was the youthful Empress of Austria, who shone as a new star in his firmament. From Karlsbad he went to Teplitz, where he took the baths for six weeks. In the room next to his in the Goldenes Schiff was Napoleon 's brother Louis, who had just abdicated as King of Holland. The two men soon became fond of each other and spent a part of every day together. Goethe spoke of Louis as an agreeably tender, almost feminine nature, of the greatest

gentleness, good-heartedness, and piety, without the least trace of religious fanaticism,—a man whom one could never leave without feeling better. Goethe understood why it was that this fine, delicate nature was unable to get along with his iron brother, and why he preferred to retire to a modest private life rather than to continue to wear the thorny crown of Holland. It was certainly a happy decree of fate that Goethe should come into touch with this second member of the Napoleonic family, who, like his great brother, showed the warmest interest in the poet's works, and that Goethe should also come to have the highest regard for him, though for reasons entirely different from those which led him to admire the Emperor.

From Teplitz Goethe went to Dresden, the first time in many years, where he again feasted his soul on the incomparable art treasures of the Florence on the Elbe. He met there a little circle of Jena friends: the bookseller Frommann, with his wife, and his sister-in-law, Betty Wesselhöft; the painter Luise Seidler, a friend of Minna Herzlieb; and Professor Seebeck. Beside these there were from Weimar Johanna Schopenhauer, from Berlin Henriette Herz and Schleiermacher, of whom we do not know what impression they made on Goethe, and Sarah von Grotthus, who, together with her clever sister, Marianne von Eybenberg, had for some time been in close touch with him. "The news of his arrival," says Luise Seidler, "struck the assembled friends like a flash of lightning. One morning while I was at work in the Gallery, we heard these words: 'He is here! He is in the Gallery!' Betty Wesselhöft said: 'I do not know whether it is necessary to go to meet him; I think we shall await him here.' But when the imposing figure of the princely poet, who, in spite of his sixty-one years, was still radiant with full manly beauty, came into view at the farthest end of the Gallery, she forgot what she had said and flew quickly to meet him." A scene was enacted like that of forty years before.

After a sojourn of ten days in Dresden Goethe visited Freiberg, where he studied the mining industry, Chemnitz,

where he examined the new spinning machinery, Löbichau near Altenberg, where he devoted two days to the Duchess of Courland, and, finally, on the 3d of October, arrived in Weimar.

Soon after his return he became very much absorbed in the theatre, as, on account of the approaching starring engagement of the famous Italian singer Brizzi, it was necessary to rehearse for Italian performances, and Goethe sought to introduce Calderon into his répertoire. *Il Principe Constante* was to open the series upon the boards, and the example of the pious Spaniard led Goethe himself to undertake to write a *Tragödie aus der Christenheit*— soon given up, —which was to treat a stirring episode of the conflict between the new religion and the old gods, in restless rhythms, but with cool, calculating understanding. In addition to these theatrical tasks he had a pious duty to perform. An esteemed friend of his in Italy, the landscape painter Philipp Hackert, had bequeathed to him his papers, with the request that he construct out of them a biography.

The work, which was for the most part one of editing, took Goethe into a field with which he was familiar. In his *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*, which he had written a few years before, he had not only given almost dithyrambic expression to his enthusiasm for antiquity, and reproduced in the ideal lines of Greek plastic art the heathen proselyte, to whose appreciative eye the history of antique art had revealed itself; he had also succeeded in drawing the great scholar and writer with remarkable skill on the background of his historical and local environment, which alone made it possible to understand him in his true nature. Then when Hackert's sketch suggested to Goethe the idea of writing his own biography he was unable to conceive the task in any other way than that he should portray his youth in connection with the local and historical conditions under which he had grown up, and the political, social, and, above all, literary movements which had had an influence upon his development. He felt the need, not only of describing himself, but also of understanding how

he had been determined by personal and historical influences and by necessity. He made his life-history the subject of serious study, which he prosecuted so diligently that, beginning with 1810, he finished a volume a year for three successive years. He wrote with consummate art and, at the same time, with the greatest care and regard for the truth, although, as he says, he "modestly enough" entitled his work *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, because he was conscious that man in the present and still more in memory fashions the outer world according to his own peculiarities. We may add: and because he was forced, for the sake of higher truth, to leave minor things aside and to bring nearer together important and characteristic details so as to throw the greater light upon them.

In the middle of May, 1811, he went again to Karlsbad, where he remained but six weeks, as on this occasion his wife accompanied him and limited his social freedom. His stay at the watering-places the following year was enough longer to make up for it. First he spent ten weeks in the mountains of Karlsbad, where he met the Emperor of Austria and his daughter, the Empress of France.

How much was crowded into a short space in the days of Napoleon! Three years before, Emperor Franz and Napoleon had fought against each other on bloody battle-fields, and within a year the daughter of the Austrian Emperor became the wife of the French ruler. On the other hand, four years before, Napoleon had enjoyed the close friendship of the Czar, and now he was marching to Russia to war,—and to ruin. Goethe, who in the name of the citizens of Karlsbad, extended poetic greetings to the exalted guests, took occasion, after glorifying the Empress's husband, to close his poem with an admonition to make peace. This required a certain amount of courage. A prince who is marching to the field of war is likely to take offence if he, instead of his enemy, is admonished to make peace. To be sure, Napoleon had expressly declared his love of peace, and had laid all the blame on the Czar. But he doubtless never saw Goethe's poem. Furthermore

the royal personages kept at a measured distance from the poet. They cared to know him only from hearsay.

It was different in Teplitz, where he came into direct contact with the Empress of Austria. She knew Goethe's importance better than her imperial husband and her imperial step-daughter. At their first meeting, two years before, she had let him know that she thought highly of him, and on this occasion she expressed a still greater appreciation. She introduced him into her more intimate circle and hardly a day passed that Goethe did not spend with them a few hours in tender, gracious, and elevating conversation. In answer to the question, proposed in jest during a conversation, whether it is proper for the man or for the woman to make the first confession of love, he wrote the little comedy *Die Wette*, which contains in its small compass an admirable contribution to the psychology of the two sexes. He sought to present it before the Empress with the aid of a few members of the Imperial Court.

In the course of the four weeks of their very friendly intercourse the cheerful, sprightly Empress, who took an interest in everything human, revealed her beautiful personality in all its phases. The charm which she unconsciously exerted, and the unusual favour which she showed the poet, transported him with a kind of intoxication. He believed he saw in her one of the high archetypes of humanity. "Such an experience toward the end of one's days," he wrote to Count Reinhard from Karlsbad, "gives one an agreeable sensation, as though one were dying at sunrise, and yet were thoroughly convinced, by one's inward and outward senses, that nature is eternally productive, divinely animated to her innermost parts, faithful to her types, and subject to no age." Three months after he had parted from the Empress he wrote to Countess O'Donnell, her charming maid of honour; "For some time past I have regretfully and with difficulty avoided speaking of our worshiped Empress, for the best of people, and those who have an appreciation of the excellent, could not refrain from assuring me that I spoke enthusiastically, when I thought I was speaking

nothing but plain prose. It may be, to be sure, that, as that fellow * made prose without knowing it, I unconsciously speak poetry. But even if I were a recognised somnambulist, still I should not like to be wakened, and so I hold myself aloof from those people who never believe they see the true except when they see the common."

In Teplitz Goethe also made the acquaintance of Beethoven, who had paid him his respects through Varnhagen. The two great men met again in Karlsbad, but, unfortunately, Goethe never arrived at anything like an understanding of the importance of the composer, whom he characterised in a letter to Zelter as a "wholly untamed personality."

As the year drew to an end matters became unexpectedly serious. In the midst of the diligent work and the distractions of his life at the watering-places Goethe had listened attentively for the news which came from the far East. Whereas his diary usually passes silently over the events of the great war which had been agitating the world for twenty years, we now read: "News of Napoleon's progress." "News of the crossing of the Southern Dwina." "Papers which announce the taking of Smolensk." Later, in Weimar, under the date of the 29th of September: "News of the taking of Moscow." Then follows a long pause. Vague rumors are circulated that all is not well with the Grand Army. Suddenly, on the 15th of December, the secretary of the French embassy appears at Goethe's home and announces to him that the Emperor has just passed the city in a sleigh and while changing horses inquired about him. The French ambassador, who missed the passing Emperor, hastens after him and overtakes him in Erfurt. Here Napoleon again remembers to send "kind greetings" to the illustrious German poet. Karl August, who is the first to hear this from the ambassador, tells it to Goethe, adding: "Thus thou art ogled by heaven and hell." It was above all else this appreciation, which was shown Goethe right and left, that intensified for him

* Monsieur Jourdain, in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.—C.

the state of anxious suspense into which Germany was now entering.

The destruction of the Grand Army on the snow fields of Russia was followed by the glorious uprising of the Prussian people to throw off the foreign yoke. Many Germans who were not Prussians took enthusiastic part in the movement, some of them secretly, others openly, by word or deed. Goethe was not among the number. He remained cool toward the movement and even opposed to it.

Present conditions caused him no pain, still less anger. He could imagine a more ideal state; but that the present state was as bad as, or worse than, the former, he could not admit. On the contrary, he could say to himself that many things had been improved in Germany under the influence of Napoleon. The innumerable petty and piecemeal states, with no power to prolong their lives, were superseded by a small number of larger well-rounded states, able to maintain their integrity and to accomplish some purpose in the world. In these states administration, legislation, and education had been reformed in accordance with more modern ideals and more just principles. In the states ruled by German princes there was no fear of an endangerment of German customs. In the states that had received French rulers, such as the Kingdom of Westphalia, there was at the time little cause for anxiety. Provided the subjects were obedient, they were allowed to live on in their own way. Thus Hanover, which belonged to England, Schleswig-Holstein, which belonged to Denmark, Hither Pomerania, which belonged to Sweden, had remained German through and through. And of Alsatia Goethe knew from his own experience that, in spite of the fact that the country had belonged to France for a hundred years, German customs had there suffered hardly any losses that could be noticed.[78] King Jerome, who resided in Cassel, had not come at all with the purpose of doing violence to the national character, and his brother had given him most sensible and most liberal instructions, the substance of which was expressed in the words, that he could establish his

throne only upon the confidence and love of his subjects. The man whom Napoleon appointed to watch over Jerome, the high-minded Count Reinhard, a friend and admirer of Schiller and Goethe, was German through and through. Jerome's librarian was Jacob Grimm, the founder of German philolology and archæology, whose scholarly work led to Goethe's acquaintance with him during the French régime. The management of the whole educational system was in the hands of the German-Swiss Johannes von Müller, the intimate friend of Goethe. Goethe may have explained to himself the fact that a few ministers and high officials were Frenchmen as something temporary which would pass away as soon as the King had mastered the German language, which he was taking pains to learn. To be sure, Jerome led a frivolous, dissolute life, but the same thing could be said of many German princes. At all events, he was not such a narrow-minded, hard-hearted, petty, miserly man as his predecessor, over whose fall "all men and probably even the angels in heaven rejoiced," to borrow the expression of a cordial Napoleon-hater, Goethe's contemporary Schlosser.

In general, Napoleon, his marshals, and his ambassadors everywhere gave evidence of a high appreciation of German literature and science. Napoleon had even spoken disparagingly of French literature in comparison with the German, and had urged Goethe to come to Paris as a reformer, in a certain sense, of literary taste. Is it improbable that Goethe should have thought that the relation which had once existed in the Prussia of Frederick the Great might now be reversed, and that Napoleon might surround himself with a circle of German poets and scholars, as Frederick had surrounded himself with Frenchmen? Had not German literature risen to such a height that such a reversal was within the range of possibility? And had not Napoleon perhaps been selected by providence as an instrument to spread the German literature over the civilised world, as he had the wholesome ideas of the revolution?

Then why should men view the situation so pessimist-

ically? Why consider conditions so intolerable as to force them to take up arms? Was the fact that Napoleon and his functionaries suppressed all opposition energetically a sufficient ground? Pray, when had opposition to rulers been tolerated in Germany? The fate of Schubart, Wekherlin, and others was still fresh in the memory of all. What, indeed, had they of Weimar not had to suffer from the complaints of neighbouring states about the teaching of Jena professors? Here it was not merely the "Jacobinical" propaganda, but also the "atheistic," against which a great storm was raised. In consequence Jena had lost Fichte, the *Literaturzeitung* had been forbidden in Prussia, and it was only with great difficulty that other unpleasant complications were avoided. The burdens of war were, it is true, very oppressive. But would these burdens be lightened if they opposed war with war? And was the hope so unjustified, that after Napoleon had subjugated Russia he would give peace to the world?

The thing which Goethe was able least of all to understand was that people should complain of the loss of the German fatherland. He at times even flew into a passion over such complaints. As early as the 27th of July, 1807, he had written: "When men lament about the supposed loss of a whole—moreover, a whole which no one of them in all his life has ever seen in Germany, much less has troubled himself about—then I must conceal my impatience to avoid being impolite or appearing an egoist." If in addition to all this we take into consideration the purely personal and most agreeable experiences which he had had with the great men of France—and who could hold himself entirely free from such an influence?—we shall be able to explain why he could not greet the uprising of 1813 with unmixed joy.

Even if he had felt as did those who now took up arms against Napoleon, he would not have approved of a fight for liberty under circumstances such as prevailed at the beginning of the year 1813, for the simple reason that he did not believe it would be successful. Napoleon had been defeated

in Russia by the elements, not by arms. His military genius had still maintained its supremacy, even when all Europe was armed against him. He seemed invincible. Russia, in alliance with Austria, England, Turkey, Naples, and other powers, had not conquered him; what was to be hoped from the alliance with poor little Prussia, which had experienced such a lamentable overthrow in 1806? Enthusiasm could not take the place of tactics and strategy, cannons and bayonets, provisions and munitions; and how long would this enthusiasm hold out under deprivations, hardships, and wounds? "Enthusiasm is not a herring that can be pickled and kept for a few years," wrote the practical statesman Goethe. And if the uprising should not accomplish its end, what an indescribable misfortune it would prove for all the states and all the individuals who took part in it!

Even in case Goethe had believed in the success of the uprising he would have taken only a half-hearted interest in the fight for liberty. He asked himself: What next? A change will come in the condition of affairs, but will it be for the better? French sovereignty would be shaken off, but would it not be merely an exchange for Prussian, Austrian, or Russian sovereignty? Hence, in the late autumn of 1813, when the happy issue was as good as certain, he said to Professor Luden: "What has been gained? They say, 'liberty'; but perhaps we should call it 'liberation'—namely, liberation from one foreign yoke, not from the yoke of foreigners. It is true that I no longer see Frenchmen, nor do I see Italians any more; but I see instead Cossacks, Bashkirs, Croats, Magyars, Cassubian Wends, Samlanders, brown and other Hussars." To a Prussian it may seem surprising that Goethe should have looked upon Prussian sovereignty as a foreign sovereignty; but it must not be forgotten that by the partition of Poland Prussia had become a half-Polish state, that its center of population was in the neighbourhood of the Vistula, that Warsaw and Bialystok were Prussian cities; and that in the event of victory it might be looked upon as certain that Prussia

would be restored to her former possessions. The Prussian possessions west of the Elbe, even before the peace of Tilsit, were insignificant. And let us not forget, either, that even to-day that part of Prussia east of the Elbe still seems in the eyes of South and West Germans a Slavic-coloured country, in spite of the fact that the greater part of the Polish territory has meanwhile been lost.

Goethe could not believe either that a Prussian hegemony would deal more gently than the French protectorate with the German states. He still bore in mind how brazenly the Prussian King, in the year 1778, sent his Hussars into the duchy to enlist soldiers. Even later the Prussian Government had conducted itself in anything but a friendly manner toward Weimar, in spite of the Duke's close relationship and faithful services, and in spite of the political homage that Weimar paid.

How could Goethe hope that Prussian sovereignty would be for the good of higher culture, literature, art, and science? Before 1810 Berlin had no university, no art gallery, no large museum of natural history. To Goethe's mind its intellectual level was represented approximately by Nicolai, more recently by Kotzebue and Merkel, who fought Goethe bitterly in their *Freimütige*. Frederick the Great had favoured Frenchmen exclusively, had appointed a Frenchman president of the Academy,[79] had made a Frenchman his librarian, and had pilloried Goethe's *Götz* as a detestable play. Under Frederick William II. the development of free science was hindered as much as possible. Kant narrowly escaped being dismissed. Under Frederick William III. the Prussians sought to make up in some measure for the neglect; but Goethe felt that their method was rudely inconsiderate. They boasted of their financial resources, and wherever they found a flower of culture, that had been nurtured by others with loving care until it had struck its roots deep into the soil, they sought by means of their money to tear it up root and branch and transplant it to their own midst. They had bought the Jena *Literaturzeitung* for Halle, had taken some of the professors away from Jena,

and they came near enticing Schiller away from Weimar to Berlin by means of a large offer of money. There may have been many other such things going on between Weimar and Berlin that we do not know about. Suffice it to say that Goethe gradually conceived the strongest aversion to Prussia. In 1780 he had spoken in *Die Vögel* of the "ever-ready claws of the Back Eagle," and in October, 1809, he wrote to Zelter: "Weimar and Jena, two small towns, which God has still preserved, although the noble Prussians would gladly have destroyed them in more than one way long ago." The fact that the Prussian King and Queen, on their repeated visits in Weimar, had paid no attention to him was not calculated to put him in a more friendly frame of mind.

How could he, then, rejoice in a war which, if successful, must give this state a still greater ascendency than it had hitherto enjoyed?

If Prussia had been the only country to be feared, it might have been different. But what was behind Prussia? Austria, still under the ban of rigid ecclesiasticism, with a population composed for the most part of Slavs and Magyars, and only a very small German element; and Russia, intellectually dead, despotic, and half-Asiatic. With the eye of a prophet Goethe pointed out to Luden the danger which threatened from that quarter: "We have for a long time been accustomed to turn our eyes only toward the west, and to expect all danger from that direction alone, but the earth stretches out also far to the east." How well-founded Goethe's fears proved to be! Germany was afterward dominated by Austria and Russia for fifty years.

Nevertheless, the inexperienced youths and men who hastened to arms with joyful hearts and boldly faced the future were right, and experienced Goethe was wrong. There are moments in the life of a nation when the wise men are fools and the fools wise; when it is not the understanding, not cool weighing and calculation of the material factors, but the feelings, and the feelings alone, that decide. Such a moment was the year 1813. Men felt that, in view of the moral loss which Napoleon's power and his faith in himself

had suffered through the destruction of the Grand Army in Russia, all calculations based on the past and the present would not stand the test. It was felt, further, that the one thing above everything else to be done was for Germany to throw off the Napoleonic yoke; it was felt that this yoke was not more oppressive, but was more dangerous than any other. It was more dangerous because of the great genius that laid it on, and because of the insinuating power of the French language and civilisation, particularly that siren Paris with all her fair charms and her great treasures of science and art. Austria and Russia—to leave Prussia out of account, whose calling to become a German state was felt—might cast Germany into chains; these chains might press, chafe, and wound, but the soul of the German national body would remain untouched. French sovereignty, on the other hand, threatened to estrange the German people from its truest individuality, threatened to bring a blight upon its peculiar development, and to make of it a mere offshoot of the French race.

All the appreciation which Napoleon and his subalterns showed for German literature could not alter these facts. The mass of the French nation would have remained inaccessible to the German spirit, and the greater weight of this factor would gradually have settled the issue. This Goethe failed to recognise. He also failed to recognise the mighty secret growth since 1807 of Prussia's moral, intellectual, and military strength. He beheld things from the point of view of Weimar; and no matter how high the summit upon which an observer stands, his outlook is determined and limited by his position.

Whether Goethe had held one set of views or another, he could not have been influenced by them to assume any other attitude than that which he did assume. He could not lend any assistance to the movement either in prose or in verse, in word or in deed. It was incumbent upon him, for his own sake, for the sake of the duchy, and of the German cause, to remain most reserved. Up to the end of October, 1813, Weimar was within the range of the French;

it lay under the cannons of Erfurt. The French, extremely angry and mistrustful, because of their unsuccessful campaign and the Prussian uprising, watched sharply and punished relentlessly every suspicious step, to say nothing of public rebellion or agitation. In April they intercepted a letter from Weimar Councillor von Voigt (the son of the Minister) and Chamberlain von Spiegel. The letter was written in cipher, but contained no captions criticisms; nevertheless the authors were immediately captured and taken to Erfurt, where they were to be shot. Napoleon was going to have Jena burned because some students disguised as Cossacks had frightened the French troops. It was only by the most courageous and most skilful intervention of Privy Councillor von Müller with Napoleon, and by the voluntary self-humiliation of the Duke, who in his heart cursed the French, that these two calamities were averted.

What would Goethe not have risked if he had at that time appeared in public as the enemy of France? The higher his station, the more dangerous his example; and the greater the friendship which the Emperor had shown for him, the crasser his own treachery would have appeared. He would have been hazarding his own life and the existence of the duchy, and would have given occasion for the severest measures of oppression throughout the whole of Germany. Furthermore, Goethe had to keep himself intact for an emergency. If Germany should again be defeated he was the one man who could hope to induce the French Emperor to preserve the German nationality. Those of Goethe's contemporaries who realised the situation never once thought of demanding of him a public declaration of his attitude; it was only later that such demands were made. On the contrary, the one thing desired of him at that time was that, in the midst of the confusion of the times, he should preserve the repose and the mood to continue his immortal work, which was of far greater importance than the problems of the hour, and could not be accomplished by anybody but him. His work was felt to be truly patriotic, not

merely because it was most thoroughly German in character —even Jahn, the declared enemy of all foreigners, and a blind admirer of everything German, called Goethe the most German of all German poets (1810)—but also because it refreshed and strengthened every German. Fouqué, the poet and Prussian cuirassier officer, wrote with reference to the years 1806 to 1813: "I rejoiced most cordially that the sublime poet continued his worthy life without interruption, although, as it then seemed, in the midst of a world tumbling to ruin." Schelling says of those days: "Germany was not orphaned, nor impoverished: with all its weakness and internal disruption, it was great, rich, and mighty in spirit, so long as Goethe was still alive." Knebel wrote to Goethe on the 4th of April, 1813: "It is my hope and desire that the present storms may not disturb thy spirit in its work. In this connection I think very often of thee, the only man who by his spirit towers high above this age." And as though he had read Knebel's letter, Ernst Moritz Arndt, one of the most zealous participants in the uprising, wrote in the *Historisches Taschenbuch* of 1814: ". . . and yet some men towered above all the rest, and one so high that he stands out like a divine miracle. It is Goethe, the poet, not merely a child of his time, but on the one hand a picture of Germany's past, and on the other a picture of her future." How profound, and how beautifully expressed!

He was a mighty oak to which others clung and drew themselves up to the light, a pillar, to whose shining capital men looked up with enthusiasm. Through him the best of his fellow-countrymen felt for the first time what it meant to be a German. In this sense he steeled the arms of the champions of liberty more than any war songs, orations, or political pamphlets could have done. In addition to the fact that, with such a noble and full embodiment of the German character, a want of patriotism was a logical impossibility, we have no lack of direct proofs of his positive German sentiments.

Soon after the catastrophe he busied himself very

seriously with plans for a lyrical and historico-religious folk-book, a "Homer of the Germans," which would have been calculated to preserve the German nation's consciousness of its own individuality, even though the country was for the time being suffering from political oppression. Moreover, whenever the poet opened his heart to a friend, he gave unreserved expression to the deepest love of country. In the course of the very significant conversation which he had with Luden[80] in November, 1813, he said: "A comparison of the [politically so deteriorated and helpless] German people with other peoples arouses within us painful feelings, which I seek in every possible way to overcome, and in science and art I have found the wings upon which one can rise above them[81]; for science and art belong to the world, and in their presence the limitations of nationality vanish. But the consolation which they afford is only a sorry comfort and cannot take the place of the proud consciousness of belonging to a nation that is great, strong, respected, and feared. Likewise it is a comfort merely to think of Germany's future, in which I believe as firmly as you do. Truly the German people give promise of a future, have a future. The fate of the Germans is not yet fulfilled. If they had had no other task to perform than that of overthrowing the Roman Empire and creating and organising a new world, they would long ago have gone to ruin; but inasmuch as they have continued to exist, and are still endowed with such strength and excellence, I believe they must have a great future before them, a calling which will be as much greater as their civilisation is now higher than in the days when they performed the mighty task of destroying the Roman Empire and building the Middle Ages on its ruins."

Luden adds to his account of the conversation the remark: "In this hour I have become thoroughly convinced that those men are most sadly mistaken who accuse Goethe of having had no love of country, no German sentiment, no faith in our people, no feeling for Germany's honour or shame, good fortune or bad. . . ."

He departed from the great man with tears in his eyes.

From what has been shown it is obvious that 1813 cannot have been for Goethe a happy year. Besides, he was under a constant strain on account of the immediate present,—the very anxious situation of Weimar, which stood squarely between two fires,—the battles round the city, which threatened his extremely valuable possessions—the achievements of a long life,—and the never-ceasing billeting of soldiers, together with all the accompanying unrest, the epidemics, and the like.

The first months of the year had been tolerable. In April, however, the horizon suddenly became dark. The Weimar battalion was captured by the Prussians, Prussians and Russians occupied the heights about Weimar, and a battle with the French, who were advancing from the west, might momentarily be expected. With the passivity which he was forced to observe toward events, Goethe fell into such a gloomy state of mind—Frau von Stein thought him afflicted with melancholia—that his family urged him to leave the city and go to Teplitz. He gave especial credit for the suggestion to his wife, who must have had a natural desire to be assured of his assistance in the danger which threatened. He yielded to the request, and after he had carried away and buried his art-treasures, and, doubtless, also his most important manuscripts, he left Weimar.

It was the 17th of April, and he escaped just in time. The following day cannon balls began to whiz across the city, and the streets resounded with the fire of musketry. To the east all was still peaceful, though the large numbers of troops betrayed the approach of war. Dresden was full of Prussian and Russian soldiers. With a band of Cossacks Goethe saw a camel and thoughtfully observed this "Asiatic sign." From the elder Körner, whose son Theodor had joined the Lützow corps of volunteers, and from Ernst Moritz Arndt, whom he met at Körner's house,[82] Goethe did not conceal how destitute of hope he was. "O you good fellows," he exclaimed to them, "just rattle your chains! That man is too great for you, you will not break them." How little

this deceived Arndt as to Goethe's German sentiments we have already heard.

Goethe remained at Teplitz over three months. He found there the quiet which he sought, and used it to complete the third volume of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, a patriotic work of the highest rank, even in the common acceptance of the term. It was that volume in which he characterised Alsatia, with all its intimate charms, as a German country, and described the triumphant Germanism of the Storm and Stress as aglow with the warmth of youth, while French intellectual life appeared to him cold and senile. He inspired Alsatia with longing and Germany with hope. Thus much is certain, that, in 1870, if strategic considerations had not required the return of Alsatia it would have been demanded by the love which Goethe has enkindled for that beautiful land between the green Rhine and the blue Vosges.

Apart from the joy in his work Goethe received no spiritual refreshment from his sojourn in Teplitz. The whole interest of the society at the watering-place was centred in the war, and the only things talked about were the experiences, fears, and hopes of the war. As nothing was more obnoxious to Goethe than harping on the terrors of the past, and fruitless talking about politics, he wrote to Countess O'Donnell, with a tinge of grim humour, "Teplitz is at present a kind of purgatory, as it were, in which half-damned souls torture, while pretending to entertain, each other."

On the 10th of August he left Teplitz. In Dresden he again observed strange goings-on. The city was now occupied by the French, and whereas in April the good citizens had greeted the King of Prussia and the Czar of Russia with an illumination and a procession of maidens clad in white, they were now celebrating Napoleon's birthday with an illumination and fireworks.

The decisive October days were approaching with their many anxieties, which Goethe sought to overcome by burying himself in the history and poetry of the Orient and the study of comparative anatomy. During the battle

of Leipsic he wrote the prophetic words in the epilogue to Dyk's tragedy, *Graf von Essex:*

Der Menſch erfährt, er ſei auch, wer er mag,
Ein letztes Glück und einen letzten Tag.*

Two days after the battle the war-flood swept over Weimar. The French sought to cover their retreat before the pursuing allies, and on the 21st and 22d of October Weimar and the surrounding country became the scene of many conflicts. On the 30th of October Goethe wrote in a letter: "If you will but fancy that in the last forty-eight hours we have run the whole gamut from the most terrible things to the vilest, you will certainly sympathise with your friend." The following weeks and months were also anything but pleasant. Erfurt was besieged, and during this time Weimar was the hospital station of the besieging corps. From the hospitals various diseases, such as dysentery and typhoid fever, spread to the inhabitants. Besides, there was no end to the billeting of large numbers of soldiers, which at times lodged very disagreeable guests in Goethe's house. Another painful thing to him was the fact that August announced his intention of enlisting in the Weimar corps of volunteers, which the Duke recruited in December. Goethe could not spare his son. Riemer had gone to the Gymnasium in 1812; John, his successor, had had to be dismissed in the summer on account of illness; and a suitable substitute had not yet been found. Thus August was the only person familiar with his father's collections, books, manuscripts, correspondence, and documents, and with the management of his property, and the only person who could be trusted implicitly in all these matters. So Goethe declared bluntly to Minister von Voigt that without August's support his position would immediately be made intolerable, indeed, his existence would become impossible. Accordingly he begged the Duke to leave August in his civil office of Chamber assessor. The Duke granted the request without further ado, but the public considered it scandalous.

* To man there comes, ay, be he who he may,
A final fortune and a final day.

As though a prince or a minister would have allowed an indispensable secretary to enlist as a volunteer, and as though Goethe, the first man of the nation, as Iffland called him in 1814, did not deserve the same consideration!

The following year the Duke marched to the Rhine and soon afterward across it as a Russian general and the commander of a corps of the army of the German Confederation. Germany was rid of the enemy and of war, and heaved a sigh of relief.

On the 9th of April Weimar received the news of the taking of Paris. "Firing of guns in token of joy all day long," wrote Goethe in his diary. In May he received a request from Berlin to write a play in celebration of the return of the King. He wrote in response *Des Epimenides Erwachen*.[83]

The only way in which the subject could be treated was allegorically. There is always something cold about an allegory, but there was one possibility in this case of giving the subject the warm breath of life, and that was for the poet to keep as close as possible to the historical facts and, at the same time, to introduce the pathos of the fanfares of victory and freedom. Goethe failed to do the former and was incapable of doing the latter. The idea which he had, of placing the allegorical action between the going to sleep and the waking up of Epimenides, made the poem still more difficult to enjoy. To be sure, he gained by this means the advantage of being able to condemn in the picture of Epimenides his own serene resignation and composure during the foreign rule,* and yet at the same time to

* Doch schäm' ich mich der Ruhestunden;
Mit euch zu leiden war Gewinn:
Denn für den Schmerz, den ihr empfunden,
Seid ihr auch grösser als ich bin.

* Those hours of sleep now shame me sore;
'T was gain life's woes with you to try,
Since for the pain which then you bore
You now are greater far than I.

justify it, because it gave him "clear emotions" and a clear gaze into the future.

This result is enough in itself to satisfy us. Let us be content and not demand of the currant bush that it bear apples.

NOTES

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

W.—The Weimar edition of Goethe's *Werke, erste Abteilung*, poetical, biographical, and esthetical writings.
NS.—do., *zweite Abteilung, Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften.*
Tb.—do., *dritte Abteilung, Tagebücher.*
Br.—do., *vierte Abteilung, Briefe.*
H.—The Hempel edition of Goethe's *Werke.*
DW.—*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Weimar edition.
Ber. d. FDH.—*Berichte des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts.*
GJ.—*Goethejahrbuch.*
Vjschr.—*Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturgeschichte.*
SGG.—*Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft.*
Kürschner.—The Kürschner edition of Goethe's *Werke.*
G. u. Sch. Arch.—Goethe- und Schillerarchiv in Weimar.

1. Goethe worked on *Der Falke* in the summer of 1776. How far the piece progressed we do not know. None of it has been preserved. We must seek by way of conjecture to arrive at its subject-matter from the few hints dropped by Goethe himself, and from Boccaccio's story, which served as a source. In the story we are told that a rich Florentine knight, Federigo, fell in love with a noble lady by the name of Giovanna, and was so prodigal of his means in courting her that finally there was nothing left of all his possessions but a small farm and his favourite falcon. As Giovanna remained faithful to her husband and would not hear Federigo, the latter withdrew resigned to his farm. Some time afterward Giovanna's husband died, whereupon she and her son moved to a country-seat near Federigo's farm. The son often saw Federigo's falcon and formed an extraordinary liking for the bird, and when he became seriously ill he thought that he could get well only on condition that his mother secure the falcon for him. The mother went immediately to see Federigo, without, however, at once making known the purpose of her visit. Federigo, greatly pleased, wished to set a good meal before the lady, for whom he still cherished an ardent love, and, having nothing else fit to offer her, had his dear falcon roasted. At the table Giovanna laid her request before him, and painful as it was to her not to be able to obtain the falcon, still, on the other hand, she was greatly affected by the hospitality which had cost such a sacrifice. Before long her son died, and, now that she knew Federigo's true worth, she overcame the ob-

jections of her brothers, who considered him too poor a man for her, and married him. Goethe confessed in a letter to Frau von Stein that he desired that this piece might echo his love experiences with Lili, but in such a way that Giovanna would receive some of the traits of Frau von Stein. We may assume that in the working out Giovanna would have had in her more of Frau von Stein than of Lili, just as her situation far more resembled that of Frau von Stein. And for Goethe a broad foundation would have been laid upon which to erect a poetical expression of his yearning desire to possess the woman he loved.

2. *Elpenor*, which Goethe began in 1781, continued to the end of the second act in 1783, and then dropped, is a drama of longing in another sense. Here also we find a lonesome woman (Antiope), who has lost her husband and, apparently, also her son, and that, too, by murder. For years she has loved and cherished her (pretended) nephew, and now he is to return home to his father. All her thinking and pondering is longing,—longing for the filling of a mighty void, longing for a reunion with her son, if he is still alive, and longing for terrible revenge. The fragment is composed in iambic *vers irréguliers*, which are often pentameters. Goethe later declared that he had made an incredible mistake in the choice of the subject-matter. And that is true. Medeas and Chriemhildes thirsting for revenge had no place in his workshop. In spite of the "Schauspiel" written on the original copy, I cannot believe in a happy outcome of the piece. The poet certainly had such an outcome in mind, otherwise he could not have intended it for the celebration of the birth of the crown prince. But closer consideration must have convinced him that, in view of the nature of the plot and of the characters, it would have been a great mistake to choose any other than a tragic outcome. Furthermore, I see evidences of the play's being designed for the celebration, in the fact that through the character of Elpenor, the Duchess was to gain an insight into the Duke's nature, and in this way the better mutual understanding, for which the birth of the crown prince prepared the way, was to be strengthened.

3. While the dramas written before the journey to Italy have a pronounced strain of longing, *Iphigenie in Delphi*, conceived in Italy, bears the stamp of fulfilment,—Iphigenia at home, in the country that her soul was seeking; Goethe found himself in a similar position. Beside the outline which Goethe inserted in the *Italienische Reise* under the heading "Bologna, Oct. 19th," nothing has been preserved.

4. Bodmer was the first to find fault with him (*cf.* Bächtold, *Goethes Iphigenie*, vi.). Later, Gottfried Hermann, in the introduction to his edition of the *Tauric Iphigenia* of Euripides (p. xxv.), Lewes, and, I am sorry to say, Paul Heyse (*Deutsche Rundschau*, July, 1894). The latter, to be sure, in the form of the alternatives: Iphigenia, overcome with happiness, should either have remained silent, or have burst out with a thrilling cry of joy. He overlooks the fact that she does the former. She does not interrupt her brother, but listens to his words to the end, and still maintains her silence as he withdraws. A good actress will pause a little while, even after Orestes has gone, before she utters the prayer which arises from a heart stirred to its deepest depths

5. "May the idea of purity, which extends even to the bite which I take into my mouth, ever become clearer in me" (*Tageb.*, August 7, 1779). "In my calling as a writer I have never asked the question, How shall I benefit the world? It has always been my one endeavour to gain more insight and make myself better, to increase the worth of my own personality, and then always to express only what I recognised as good and true" (Eckermann, *Gespräche*, 4th ed., iii., 237).

6. Manuscripts and first editions of *Iphigenie*. The version of 1779 is preserved in a manuscript in the Royal Library in Berlin and, as has recently been discovered, in the Sarasin Archives in Basel (*cf.* Langmesser, *Sarasin*, p. 25, note 1). It was first published by Düntzer, *Die drei ältesten Bearbeitungen von Goethes Iphigenie*, 1854. The same version, divided into *vers irréguliers*, is found in the Ducal Library in Dessau in a copy made by Lavater in the year 1780. First printed in full by Bächtold, *Goethes Iphigenie in vierfacher Gestalt*, 1883. (Viktor Michels, who has collated the manuscripts of *Iphigenie* with great care, surmises, in the Weimar edition, that the division into verses is Lavater's own idea. Among the many things in the way of accepting this view are: (1) the close relationship between the versification of the Parzenlied and that finally adopted for the play; (2) the lack of any motive on the part of Lavater, as Max Koch has already pointed out. (Cf. *Ber. d. FDH., N.F.* xiii., 300.) An intermediate stage between the version of 1779 and that of 1781 is represented by a manuscript which was lost by the burning of the Strasburg Library, but Loeper had a copy of it which he later published in the eleventh volume of the Hempel edition. This text, again, shows continuous prose. Such is also the case with the revised version of 1781, of which we still possess six manuscripts, four in the G. u. Sch. Arch., one in Gotha (Ducal Library), one in Oldenburg (Grand Ducal Library). It was first published in 1839 by A. Stahr, as *Iphigenie in ihrer ersten Gestalt*. The final redaction of the year 1786 we have in the manuscript written in Rome in Goethe's own hand (G. u. Sch. Arch.). The play was published in 1787. It appeared both with the edition which Goethe was preparing of all his previous works, and separately. First performance in Vienna in 1800, in Berlin in 1802.

7. Models for the Characters in *Tasso*. That the Princess is the poetical reflection of Frau von Stein is apparent enough from Goethe's correspondence with her. This of itself leads to the conclusion that Tasso is one side of Goethe elaborated into a whole character, as the poet himself more than once said (*Br.*, *v.*, 299; Eckermann, *ibid.*, iii., 117 and 110) Furthermore, there can be no question that Alphonso is the idealisation of Karl August. But what about the prototypes for Antonio and Leonora Sanvitale? Even if we were not familiar with the poet's ways we should have to assume that there were models, and that, too, in Weimar. But he tells us so specifically with reference to Antonio. As the chief model I have mentioned Count Goertz, and any one who reads my characterisation of the Count (vol. i., p. 260) will be inclined to say that I am right. I have based this characterisation on the sources, without having the least thought of Antonio. I had occasion to examine the documents again in my search for the Antonios of Weimar, and I at once

became perfectly certain that he alone could have furnished the poet with the essential features of the Secretary of State of Ferrara. I should like to add here a few opinions concerning the Count, by way of supplement to what I have already said. Duchess Amalia says to Fritsch: "You know him; he is ambitious, scheming, and restless; in order to attain his ends he fondles and cajoles Karl." From the words "You know him" we assume that Fritsch entertained the same opinion concerning him. And, sure enough, we find evidences of it in his utterances. He also contributes further interesting material for the characterisation of Goertz. He speaks of weaknesses and blunders which certain men (meaning Goertz in particular), "in spite of all the understanding which they think they have, are not wise enough to cover up." Goertz and Wieland, he says, will soon be at outs, for jealousy will enter into their relations. On a later occasion he advises the Duchess to conceal her pique against Goertz, "so as not to embitter persons who are low enough to think they can obtain satisfaction by infusing the Duke's breast with the sentiments with which they themselves are inspired." Wieland, who had at first allowed himself to be deceived by fine appearances, became indignant when he saw Goertz in his true character. On the 5th of July, 1776, he wrote to Merck: "Goertz is preparing to come to your region of the country in order to stir up everybody against Goethe and me. The wretch! No more about the vermin." Bertuch called Goertz an exceedingly proud and ambitious man, the prince of hypocrites. His great talents obtained for him the most prominent positions, and many people praised him, not only for his ability, but also for his faithfulness, good nature, and devotion. Opinions concerning him are therefore just as variable as they are concerning Antonio. What Goethe probably thought of him can be imagined from the opinions here cited. But he doubtless had a higher appreciation of the man's intellectual importance than the other opponents had. It would have been strange indeed if Goethe had not put into his portfolio of studies a sketch of this remarkable personality. Neither can his interest have been lessened by Goertz's departure at the end of 1777. It should rather have been increased by the brilliancy of Goertz's further career, for in 1779 he became the Prussian ambassador in St. Petersburg. Furthermore, if Goethe wished to combine in one personality the secret opposition with which he met in Weimar (only Fritsch opposed him openly), he could not well have made a better choice. All the others were less brilliant and less richly endowed. Let me mention Seckendorff, for example.—In the case of Leonora Sanvitale one must first of all think of Duchess Amalia. The same age, similarity of taste (Ariosto—Wieland), enjoyment of the world, enjoyment of the rôle of a poet's patroness, shrewd, clever, somewhat egotistical, and yet honest and kind.

8. I should like to remark here emphatically that I can in no wise accept Kuno Fischer's hypothesis (*Goethes Tasso*, Heidelberg, 1890) that the outline and the full text of the earliest version of *Tasso* contained no character Antonio.

9. The objection might be raised that when Goethe was planning *Tasso* the minister in him was more than ever alive. But what was the

nature of the original plan? It was entirely recast in Italy, and Goethe declared: "What is already done can be made no use of. I can neither end thus, nor throw everything away." How else could Goethe have said what is quoted in the following note? For the most painful and most odious thing to him was the memory of his official career, which had finally driven him to despair because of its unpleasantness, its meagre results, as he thought, and its acting as a hindrance to his poetical production. Furthermore, Goethe read more into the words of Ampère than was really contained in them. All that Ampère says is: "Le caractère de ses personnages, leurs relations idéales, le type que chacun d'eux représente, on sent qu'il n'a pas trouvé tous cela dans l'histoire de Ferrare; on reconnaît les souvenirs de Weimar transportés, pour les embellir, dans les siècles poétiques du moyen âge et sous le doux ciel d'Italie. . . . il me semble que c'est lui qui parle par la bouche du Tasse; et dans cette poésie si harmonieuse, si délicate, il y a du Verther." Madame de Staël also felt the German in the characters of *Tasso*. She says: "Leonore d'Est est une princesse allemande. . . . Le Tasse est aussi un poète allemand" (*De l'Allemagne*, ii., 165, 2nd ed., Paris, 1814).

10. Because of this parallel which Goethe drew between his own regeneration in Italy and Tasso's he said in praise of the French critic Ampère: "He has had the ability to see what I have nowhere expressed in words and what, so to speak, was only to be read between the lines. How correctly he has observed that, during the first ten years of my life of service at the Court of Weimar, I produced practically nothing, that despair drove me to Italy, and that I there, with a new desire to create, seized upon the story of Tasso, in order in the treatment of this suitable material to rid myself of the painful and odious things which still haunted my impressions and memories of Weimar." But in connection with this utterance, which was made almost four decades later, we must remember that for some time after his Italian journey this process was still unfinished, and that it received added significance from his rupture with Frau von Stein.

11. There are two manuscripts of *Tasso* in existence, the next to the last and the last corrected copy, both in the hand of a copyist, the former made between November, 1788, and July, 1789; the latter between April and August, 1789. Both are in the G. u. Sch. Arch. (E. Scheidemantel has published very illuminating investigations of them in the *Programm des Weimarer Gymnasiums*, 1896, and in the *G J.*, xviii., 163*ff.*). The next to the last corrected copy shows a large number of changes. Many verses are crossed out or inserted. Several places are pasted over for this purpose; in one place a sheet bearing fourteen new verses (2975–2988) is pinned on. The text on these slips pasted in and pinned on is written in Goethe's hand. If the next to the last revised copy is in such a state one can form an approximate idea of the condition of the preceding manuscripts. That, in view of this condition of the manuscripts, the poet, in spite of all the care he exercised while working at the composition, could happen to overlook four lines in one place, as I surmise he did in the case of the short soliloquy of Leonora (III., 5), is readily conceivable. For the fact that he worked at the composition by

fits and starts, and, beginning at the end, worked backwards, could not help favouring such an oversight (*cf.* Scheidemantel, *loc. cit.*). The drama appeared in print in the beginning of 1790, in the complete edition of Goethe's works, and separately. It made still less of an impression than *Iphigenie*. Both the taste and the interest of the times had been drawn away from such delicate products.

12. This was the judgment of all his friends. Henriette von Egloffstein says in her memoirs that when she first saw Goethe, which was in 1795, he corresponded neither physically nor morally to the descriptions which his enthusiastic admirers had given of him. "When I expressed my surprise at this to those who had formerly eulogised him, they unanimously assured me that since his departure for Italy such a change had come over him, that even his most intimate friends were no longer able to discover in him a single trace of his former self. Among the number I think especially of well-wishing, considerate Hildebrand von Einsiedel. . . . At the time when I made Goethe's acquaintance he seemed to me gruff, saving of his words, stiff as a Philistine, and cold as an iceberg" (*GJ.*, vi., 62*f.*). For Charlotte von Schiller's impression *cf.* Düntzer, *Charlotte von Stein*, i., 336; for Sophie Brentano's *cf.* Erich Schmidt, *Karl Weinhold, zum 26. Okt., 1893*, p. 6. Goethe's last letters from Italy had shown that he "had grown cold toward his friends." *Cf.* the letter from his mother to Fritz von Stein, in Ebers und Kahlert, *Briefe von Goethe und dessen Mutter an Friedrich Freiherrn von Stein*, p. 102; also Kanzler von Müller, *Goethe in seiner praktischen Wirksamkeit*, p. 12. He brought home with him an "indifference toward men"; *cf. SGG.*, v., 118: "Still cold, as he is toward everybody. He is a very unhappy man. He must be constantly at variance with himself," etc.; *cf.* F. Münter, July 5, 1791 (*GJ.*, xviii., 115).

13. This change is obvious also in his letters. Compared with those of former years, they now become for a time cool, dry, matter-of-fact, and brief. Only those to friends in Italy and those to the Duke reveal any special warmth. Not until after his friendship with Schiller do they again show, as a rule, personal feeling, but even then they do not let us see into the depth of his heart as those of former years do.

14. "Furthermore, I am studying the ancients and am following their example so far as it is possible in Thuringia," March 3, 1790 (*Br.*, ix., 184). Despair was certainly another motive for his liaison with Christiane.

15. *Cf.* the statement of Heinrich Voss, in Gräf, *Goethe und Schiller*, pp. 103 and 161. Concerning Christiane *cf.* Ludecus, *Aus Goethes Leben;* the very perspicuous characterisation in *Das Büchlein von Goethe*, p. 29*ff.*; the judgment of Frau Knebel, in Biedermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, iv., 63*f.*; of Charlotte von Schiller, in Saitschick, *Goethes Charakter*, p. 35; of Johanna Schopenhauer, in her account of Christiane's terrible death (*GJ.*, xv., 323); of Elisa von der Recke, *GJ.*, xiii., 143; of Riemer, *Mitteilungen über Goethe*, i., 58 and 357 *ff.*; of Gries, in Diezmann, *Aus Weimars Glanzzeit*, p. 26.

Christiane Sophie Vulpius, born June 1, 1765, was the daughter of the Weimar Recorder Vulpius. Her brother, Christian August Vulpius (1762-1827), a prolific writer of novels, and a student of folklore and

antiquities (*cf.* Gödeke, *Grundriss*, 2nd ed., v., 511-514), was the author of *Rinaldo Rinaldini* (1798), a very popular novel in its day. Even before the Italian journey Goethe had taken an interest in him, and later employed him at the theatre; in 1805 he was put in charge of the Library.

Before long Goethe also took into his house Christiane's younger half-sister, Ernestine, and her aunt, Juliane Auguste Vulpius, both of whom died in 1806.

16. "It is a fact worthy of special consideration that *habitude* can completely take the place of love-passion; it demands, not so much a charming, as an agreeable presence, but with this requirement fulfilled it is invincible. . . It holds out against everything disagreeable. . ." Cf. *H.*, xxix., 237.—Goethe's struggle to overcome it is described in the elegy *Amyntas* (Sept., 1797).

17. "I hope you will allow my poor boy further to enjoy your society and to instruct himself by observing you" (letter to Frau von Stein, Sept. 7, 1796, *Br.*, xi., 188).

18. Shortly afterwards Garve (doubtless influenced by Schuckmann), in a letter to Weisse, passed a more correct judgment concerning him.

19. *Cf.* C. A. H. Burkhardt, *Das Répertoire des Weimarischen Theaters unter Goethes Leitung*, 1791–1817; Pasqué, *Goethes Theaterleitung in Weimar; Br.*, xvii., 137.—Amalie Malcolmi began at two thalers (*Br.*, x., 223); *cf.* Pasqué, ii., 234.

20. In 1807, when the Weimar troupe gave performances in Leipsic, they were there considered superior to the Dresden company. *Cf.* Wahle, *SGG.*, vi., 295. Immermann, who, as a student, had witnessed the performances in Halle and Lauchstädt since 1823, said: "There it was not a question of amusement; I was delighted, I was enraptured. The old church in which the stage had been erected was to me a hallowed hall, and the impressions of those days have shaped my whole after life. It was through a musical quality in the way the lines were spoken, a rhythmical gracefulness in walk and gesture, and the atmosphere of poetry, that the great poet had made his institution a copy of his own harmonious soul." (*K. Immermann, Sein Leben und seine Werke*, Berlin, 1870, i., 19.) *Cf.* also the judgment of Johanna Schopenhauer, who came from Hamburg and Munich, in Düntzer, *Abhandlungen zu Goethes Leben*, i., 117*f.*

21. More accurately, on the King of Bohemia and Hungary, who was not crowned as Emperor till the 14th of July. *Cf.* Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs des Grossen bis zur Gründung des deutschen Bundes*, i., 320.

22. Concerning the subject-matter *cf.* the following account in the *Revolutions-Almanach für 1795*, p. 281: "In the Thuringian Forest, in the territory of one of the Saxon duchies, there came to public notice in 1794 a man who was born in one of the little forest villages of that region. He appeared in the inns in the costume of a sans-culotte, with a red cap either in his pocket or on his head. . . He assured the people that the time had now come for the subjects to rule . . . and proposed that they

drive princes and rulers, officials and clergy out of the country." He received a sound thrashing from the charcoal burners and the wood-choppers.—"The old cathedral of Strasburg, Ervinus's great monument was in November, 1793, compelled to house this very kind of farce [institution of the cult of reason]. A Jew went up into the pulpit and preached revolutionary nonsense to the crowd, and, according to a newspaper report, a beautiful peasant girl, who had enough German reason to refuse to represent the French *raison*, was guillotined at the order of the national commissioners" (*ibid.*, p. 329).

23. In matters of metre greater care is shown: there is one verse of six feet in every 369, whereas in *Iphigenie* there is one in 229, and in *Tasso* one in 150 (cf. *Ber. d. FDH.*, xiv., 327).

24. The jewel-scene is superfluous, so far as the development of the plot is concerned, but not from the point of view of the development of Eugenie's character. She needs to learn caution and self-control, if her later rôle is to be a success. For the motivation of her tragic guilt it is too narrow a foundation.

25. In the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* the historical connection serves only as an introduction. *Das Märchen* should perhaps be excepted, if one were sure of how to interpret it. *Hermann und Dorothea* is not primarily a poem of the revolution.

26. The date of Goethe's first acquaintance with Spinoza is discussed with much insight — for the pre-Weimarian period, however, altogether too sceptically — by Robert Hering in his *Spinoza im jungen Goethe*, Leipsic, 1897. He shows that one must assume a critical attitude toward Goethe's own report of the facts in *DW*. Goethe's first study of Spinoza certainly dates back to the early seventies; his most intense study of the philosopher was carried on in common with Herder, in the middle of the eighties; he returned to him a third time in 1812. Once he had become a Spinozist he remained a Spinozist to the end of his life—in the sense in which, back in his Strasburg days, he professed his belief in the fundamental pantheistic idea: "separatim de deo et natura rerum disserere difficile est." For this reason he never could have become a theist; for belief in a personal God implies belief in a God distinct from nature, and there was no conception that Goethe controverted with as much passion as he did this. In the God of the Old Testament, however, he found such a personal God, and for this reason called theistic religion of any kind, as, for example, that of his mother "alttestamentlich."—Z.

27. On this point Goethe did waver in his expression, it is true, on occasion; but that is to be explained by the ambiguity of the conception. In reality he was always a determinist. A few passages will serve to show this. On the 31st of July, 1799, he wrote to Schiller: "Among other reflections on Milton's *Paradise Lost* I was compelled to think of free will, about which I am not much given to troubling my brain. In this poem, as in the Christian religion in general, it plays a miserable rôle. If we suppose man to be good by nature, we are forced to say that free will is the silly power of departing from good by choice, thereby incurring the guilt of evil; but if we suppose man to be naturally depraved or, to put it more specifically, that in his animal nature man is absolutely

controlled by his inclinations, then free will is indeed a distinguished personality to presume to act by nature contrary to nature! One can see by this how Kant was forced to adopt the idea of radical evil; also why the philosophers who consider măn so charming by nature find themselves in such straits when speaking with reference to his freedom, and why they raise such objections when one refuses to praise highly enough to suit them the good done out of inclination." Concerning Kant's idea of freedom he said to Eckermann, on the 18th of January, 1827: "I have all respect for the categorical imperative; I know how much good it can produce; but it must not be carried too far, or else this idea of ideal freedom will surely lead to no good end." The deepest reason for his determinism lay in his idea of the demonic. To pretend to "act by nature contrary to nature" seemed to him presumption; he acted by necessity out of his inmost nature and in harmony with God-nature. And so his denial of free will was the outgrowth of his religion. In the same conversation with Eckermann from which the above passage is taken we read: "It is not our unwillingness to recognise anything over us that makes us free, but our reverence for something that is over us."—Z.

28. For this part of Spinoza's *Ethica* (v., prop. 19 *ff.*) Goethe must have cherished an especial fondness. In February, 1786, a period of vexation for him, he read the *Ethica* from here on as "his greatest edification for evening worship" (letter to Herder, Feb. 20, 1786).

29. Spinoza introduces into his system God's love toward man in another way, through God's enjoyment in his own infinite perfection. Hence this love has God himself as its cause; but man feels it only through his love toward God (*Ethica*, v., prop. 35*f.*).

30. Karl Vorländer, in a series of articles entitled *Goethes Verhältnis zu Kant in seiner historischen Entwickelung* (*Philosophische Zeitschrift*, i. and ii., 1897–1898, and *GJ.*, xix.) attempts to bring Goethe nearer to Kant than has been the generally accepted view; in fact, he makes him out to be a disciple of Kant. This view, which is based on the neo-Kantian tendency of labelling everything great with the name of Kant, is by no means to be accepted; and it is to be regretted that Otto Harnack, in his excellent book *Goethe in der Epoche seiner Vollendung*, 2nd ed., 1901, has allowed himself to be won over to it. Vorländer deserves great credit, however, for having made an almost complete collection of the passages which bear on this relation, thus making it possible for every one to form his own opinion on the subject.—Z.

31. In what sense Goethe felt attracted toward Schelling's philosophy of nature is doubtless shown most clearly by a comparison of his *Fragment über die Natur*, published in the *Journal von Tiefurt*, with Schelling's poem *Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntnis Heinz Widerporstens*, of the year 1799. *Cf.* Th. Ziegler, *Die geistigen und sozialen Strömungen des 19. Jahrhunderts, 2. Aufl.*, 1901, p. 71 *ff.*—Z.

32. Goethe seems to have read the drama soon after its appearance. *Cf.* Weltrich, *Schiller*, i., 856.

33. I have treated the conversation which Goethe describes as identical with the one of which Schiller gives an account in his letter

to Körner of the 1st of September, 1794. But there may have been several. It is impossible to accept Düntzer's conjecture (*GJ.*, ii., 182), that the conversation about the *Urpflanze* occurred on the 31st of October, 1790, for the simple reason that Schiller at that time did not know Kant. *Cf.* Jonas, *Schillers Briefe*, iii., 136.

34. "You have brought me a second youth and have made a poet of me again, which I had as good as ceased to be" (letter of January 6, 1798—*Br.*, xiii., 7). *Cf.* also his letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt of the 19th of October, 1830.

35. Later on Goethe sought to make reparation for his public and unsparing attack on the old friends who bore it in silence, by erecting loving monuments to their memory in *Dichtung und Wahrheit.*

36. That the hero was named after Shakespeare is proved by a passage in *Wilhelm Meister* (*W.*, xv., 183); that Goethe thought of Shakespeare in *Künstlers Vergötterung* ("Du wirst Meister sein") is pointed out by Schröer, *Kürschner*, vi., 230.—Herder had hailed Goethe as the German Shakespeare.

37. That in the first redaction Wilhelm's theatrical career was to end victoriously is proved by the very word "mission." I consider it out of place to take this word ironically. That it was the original intention to end the work with the fulfilment of the theatrical mission, that is to say, with Wilhelm as a successful theatre director, may well be inferred from the fact that Wilhelm was to marry Mariane. Cf. *W.*, xxi., 329.

38. We feel justified in interpreting Mignon and the harpist symbolically, after what Goethe said to Chancellor von Müller: "The whole novel is symbolical; behind the ostensible characters there lies concealed throughout something more general and higher." *Cf.* the conversation of Monday, Jan. 22, 1821.

39. The problem of the opera and the ballet was apparently to occupy him also. Cf. *Tb.*, i., 216.

40. I see no occasion for supposing with Dechent (*Goethes schöne Seele*, 1896, and *Ber. d. FDH.*, xiii., 10 *ff.*) that the source was an autobiography of Fräulein von Klettenberg. Why should Goethe have kept this source a secret (in *DW.*, xxvii., 199, and in his letter to Schiller of the 18th of March, 1795), and given others instead? Out of author's vanity? Even Dechent does not assert this. Out of consideration for surviving relatives? But we know that Goethe revealed the fact in *DW.* that the Beautiful Soul and Fräulein von Klettenberg are identical. The exact dates and the parallels can be satisfactorily explained from the original sources. So there is nothing left but the promise to keep the chief source a secret, which Dechent arbitrarily supposes (*Ber. d. FDH.*, xiii., 12). Furthermore, even Dechent is forced to admit that the last part is a free invention and the rest to a large extent worked over.

41. Indeed it often seemed to the poet, in his later life, as though this result were the chief tendency of his novel, while, as a matter of fact, it is merely one of the morals which it teaches incidentally.

42. Schiller said that Wilhelm's condition of spiritual health was sufficiently guaranteed by his beautiful natural relation to Felix and by his union with Natalie's noble womanhood (July 8, 1796). But the

union with Natalie and the effect of the natural relation to Felix are both annulled by the journey itself. Schiller expressed a modified opinion in his letter of July 9th. He was in general quite charmed with Wilhelm's character (July 5, 1796).

43. Goethe gradually came to recognise that this was a peculiarity of his. Cf. *H.*, xxiv., 37.

44. As Düntzer has pointed out (*Erläuterungen zu Hermann und Dorothea*, p. 5), a circumstance that speaks in favour of Goethe's having made use of Göcking's *Emigrationsgeschichte* is the fact that he inserts the story of the overturned waggon, which occurs a few pages before the anecdote above quoted. *Cf.* Göcking, *Vollkommene Emigrationsgeschichte*, i., 671*f.*, in the chapter entitled "Von den Spuren göttlicher Vorsehung."

45. Advice to incipient poets: "Ask yourselves in connection with every poem, whether it contains an experience, and whether this experience has been the means of strengthening you" (*H.*, xxix., 231). "Since everything that I have ever published is based upon experience in life" (letter to K. J. L. Iken, Sept. 23, 1827. *Cf.* Pniower, *Goethes Faust*, p. 201.)

46. That he formed Dorothea after a model he himself confessed years later (in a letter to Antonie Brentano, July 6, 1815). Could his model have been a person toward whom he was indifferent? If not, who else could it have been than Lili, who naturally figured in his imagination as a fugitive peasant woman from beyond the Rhine?— That his mother was the original of the landlady he announced out of the joy of his heart, before the poem had appeared. *Cf.* his mother's letter of the 17th of June, 1797, in *SGG.*, iv., 133; also in Köster, *Briefe der Frau Rath Goethe*, ii., 30.

47. This is the only possible interpretation of his remarks in December, 1796 (*Br.*, xi., 273), when he spoke of "last" August as the time of the action, for in August, 1796, when the French had in their power southern and central Germany almost as far as the Thuringian and Bohemian Forests, it was no longer possible to speak of the Rhine as an "all-hindering moat," as the poem characterises it, nor could the territory on the right bank of the Rhine any longer be described as enjoying profound peace. This was possible, however, in August, 1795. Until then, with the exception of the short incursions of Custine late in 1792, the Rhine had actually proved to be a rampart; indeed in the year 1795 the French seemed permanently to have recognised it as such. Since the beginning of the year they had lain quietly behind the river and seemed inclined to be satisfied with the left bank of the Rhine, which they had had in their possession, with the exception of Mainz and Luxemburg, since the end of the preceding year. It was not until September that they suddenly carried the war over to the right bank. In August, 1795, it could also have been said, "Everything indicates peace." Through the mediation of Prussia, which had made a treaty with the French republic as early as April, the empire had begun peace negotiations, and in August had named a peace deputation to carry on further negotiations.

48. The order of arrangement in the text corresponds to the importance of the cities. Judging by the descriptive epithets which Mannheim receives, the landlord seems to have known only this city.

49. Schlegel noticed the inconsistency (Keck, *Goethes Hermann und Dorothea*, p. 87). In order to understand and reproduce the words of her first betrothed she would have had to be more highly educated than one would be justified in assuming of a peasant girl.

50. Cholevius, *Einleitung und Erläuterung zu Goethes Hermann und Dorothea*, p. 225, explains it somewhat differently, but also as a mistake in editing. *Cf.*, however, *Br.*, xii., 90, 26 *ff.*, in connection with p. 92 *ff.* Goethe ought to have assigned some motive for the parson's intentional silence, as well as for his astonishment.

51. In a long didactic poem, published a year after *Hermann und Dorothea*, Gottfried Schweighäuser portrayed his ideal of a woman, taking as his models Lili and Maria von Monbrisson. Lili's letters, however, afford the most beautiful evidence of that union of greatest delicacy and refinement of feeling with power and strength of soul which is found in her and in Dorothea.

52. In his elegy, *Hermann und Dorothea*, Goethe defends himself against the reproach of immorality. In *Hermann und Dorothea* he represents the institution of marriage, which was portrayed as very lax in *Wilhelm Meister*, and which had been shaken by his own example, as something high and glorious. The little hint, which the legend gave, of an understanding between father and son, occasioned by the marriage, he made into a deep contrast of characters, which went through the whole of life. This gave the best possible opportunity for moral power to reveal itself.

53. From the coolness of the expressions in his letter of Nov. 10, 1797, to Schiller (*Br.*, xii., 355) it is obvious that he was not greatly impressed with the art.

54. Three kilometers west of Apolda. It embraced 54 hectars and was bought by Goethe for 13,125 florins. *Cf.* Anderlind, *Wiss. Beil. der Leipziger Ztg.*, Aug. 24, 1899, No. 98.

55. Meyer's opinion concerning the characteristic in art and its relation to the beautiful is exactly the same (*Cf.* Harnack, *Klass. Ästhetik der Deutschen*, pp. 207 and 212). Goethe and Meyer, on the other hand, reproach the romanticists with suppressing everything characteristic, staunch, and vigorous (*W.*, xlix.,[1] 23). Character must be at the bottom of every work of art (*H.*, xxiv., 444).

56. He had previously shown enthusiasm for Dürer in *Von deutscher Baukunst* and on his Italian journey.

57. Nor could there be any contradiction between form and substance. He held that the form had to grow out of the substance (see vol. iii., chap. II). The same is true of nature, which is neither kernel nor shell. The application of an extraneous form in order to make something of a hollow work of art must have seemed to him a monstrous idea.

58. In the year 1799 the Berlin physicist Achard, following out the discoveries of Marggraf, published a method which he had perfected for gaining sugar from beets. Goethe took a lively interest in the experi-

ments of the Jena chemist Göttling in the production of sugar according to the directions of Achard (*cf.* A. W. Hofmann, *Ein Jahrhundert chemischer Forschung unter dem Schirme der Hohenzollern*, 1881, and Scheibler, *Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Rübenzuckerfabrik in Deutschland*, 1875).

59. Böttiger's review speaks very ironically of the play, but praises the performance in the highest terms. The criticism of the performance ends with this sentence: "What cannot serious good will accomplish when supported by uncommon powers and permeated with the animating spirit of a genius by whom it should be the first and highest pride of every German artist to be directed?" (*Cf.* Böttiger, *Kl. Schriften*, i., 340–346). It is possible that Goethe did not read the flattering closing remark concerning him and the actors, for he wrote, "You have sent it to me half printed."

60. Her real baptismal name was Wilhelmine, but she was usually called Minchen by the Frommanns, and also by Goethe. She called herself Minna, whenever she gave herself a nickname, and this name later came into general use.

61. "As Madame Frommann had gone away this autumn with her daughter, and as her adopted daughter, Minchen Herzlieb, was left at home alone, he [Goethe] went almost every day to see her and to chat away her lonely hours. She is quite a favourite friend of his, as we were told," wrote Adele Blumenbach, on the 27th of November, 1820, to Therese Huber, after a summer visit in Jena (*Goethefestschrift zum hundertfünfzigjährigen Geburtstag des Dichters, herausgegeben von der Lese- und Redehalle der deutschen Studenten in Prag*, 1899, p. 111 *f.*).

62. No manuscripts of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* have been preserved. That the printer's copy was lost is very easily explained, but it is surprising that the rough draft, the manuscript of the first redaction, and the many outlines were also lost.

63. This is the only possible thing to which Goethe could have referred when he wrote to Wolf, on the 16th of December, 1807: "I have set myself many a task of which nothing has come, and have done many things of which I had not thought, which means in the fullest sense of the word living one's life." These words would have been too weighty for the dozen sonnets which he improvised.

According to Langguth, *Sonntags-Beilage der Voss. Ztg.*, Apr. 12, 1896, the scene of the novel is Wilhelmstal near Altenstein; according to Valentin, *Festschrift des Hochstifts*, 1899, p. 44, it is Diede's Ziegenberg Castle near Nauheim. For Therese Huber's opinion *cf. GJ.*, xviii., 126*ff.*

"Let me mention the fact that in my *Wahlverwandtschaften* I endeavoured to give the true, inward *catharsis* as nearly an absolutely perfect and finished form as possible" (*Briefwechsel zw. Goethe u. Zelter*, v., 381).

Morris asserts that he has found the source of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* in a story of *The Thousand and One Nights;* Seuffert, that he has found it in Wieland's *Freundschaft und Liebe auf der Probe* (*Vjschr.*, ii., 467).

64. "J' aime mieux que le catholicisme me fasse du mal, que si on m' empêchait de m'en servir pour rendre mes pièces plus intéressantes," Jan. 27, 1804 (*Euphorion*, vii., 525). Was Goethe at that time thinking

of *Sankt Joseph der Zweite?* or of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften?* (because of Schelling and Schlegel?) or of the end of *Faust?*

65. In a letter of the 9th of May, 1809, to Frau von Stein he himself calls her "St. Ottilia."

66. Spielhagen has also recognised the unsatisfactory delineation of the character of Ottilie. "Her qualities, psychical as well as physical, make her unique, and her perceptive faculties, always difficult to fathom, become in the end incomprehensible" (*Magazin f. Lit.*, 1896, No. 13).

67. The miracle is one which, it seems to us, neither lies within the range of our experience, or, if it does, is so rare that it still remains incomprehensible in character; nor can it be developed logically out of our experience, as is the case with the healing of Orestes.

68. For an account of a similar experience which Goethe himself had, and of how he wandered about through the streets of Weimar, etc., *cf.* Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, iii., 136 *ff.* "Thou, alas, wast in some former state or my sister or my loving wife" (vol. i., 300). *Cf.* also Möbius, *Das Pathologische bei Goethe*, p. 121 *f.*, and *Geschichte der Farbenlehre* (*Kürschner*, xxxvi.,[1] 162).

69. Goethe himself must have had this same idea later, as he confessed that he could not endure Eduard. But how shall we fancy that he was satisfied to see Ottilie united with a man whom he was unable to endure? While he was at work on the novel this was hidden from his sight, because in thought he gave Eduard more of his own personality than he succeeded in getting on paper.

70. We have from that period still other passages containing the same sentiment. In one of the year 1803, in the fourth act of *Die natürliche Tochter* (ll. 2085 *ff*), we read concerning marriage:

> Favour great
> It hath with God and men, and sacred forces
> Exalt it all caprice above.

In *Winckelmann* (*W.*, xlvi., 33) we read: "One must remain steadfast in one's place, which is given more by fate than by choice. Loyalty to a nation, a city, a prince, a friend, a wife, subordinating everything else to this interest, doing all things, foregoing all things, enduring all things for the sake of this one object,—this is admired; desertion, on the other hand, is hated, and unsteadfastness becomes ridiculous."—*Die glücklichen Gatten* was published in 1804.—It is also characteristic that the first work which Goethe took up after his legal marriage, *Die Wanderjahre*, begins with the description of the happiest and purest marriage, that of St. Joseph (written in 1807).

71. In his letter accompanying the address Schelling wrote: "How much I owe to your instruction, and to the doctrine originating with you, is obvious" (*SGG.*, xiii., 250. Cf. *ibid.* LXXXIV.).

72. Schelling, who in his address calls the world-soul, which has attained to full self-consciousness in man, by the simple term "soul," and distinguishes it from the two undeveloped stages of the world-soul, the spirit of nature and the reflective spirit, says: "The soul does not know; it is knowledge: it is not good; it is goodness: it is not beautiful in the

sense that the body may be beautiful; it is beauty itself." If we substitute "Pandora" for "soul" we shall have a very good definition of her nature.

73. In nature the one involves the other, and as the true appears as the beautiful, so the beautiful shows the true. "The beautiful is a manifestation of secret natural laws, which without this phenomenon would have remained for ever concealed from us" (*Sprüche*, No. 197).

74. "In his [Zelter's] honest endeavours for good citizenship it was with him just as much a question of moral education, as this is so closely related to the esthetic, is, indeed, embodied in it, and neither can be imagined as perfect without being supplemented by the other" (*W*, xxxv., 157). "Art rests on a kind of religious sense" (*Sprüche*, 690), "The mathematician is perfect only in so far as he is a perfect man, as he feels in his soul the beauty of truth" (*Sprüche*, 950).

75. The interpretation of the images in lines 101–111 is found in lines 376–383.

76. As Müller says, it is clear that the criticism of the "certain passage" cannot be identical with the criticism of the mingling of the motives. It would be exceedingly strange if it applied to this mingling, which extends through the whole of the second part. Furthermore, the criticisms, "not natural" and "untrue," are just as little apropos, as is also Goethe's remark to Müller and Kohlrausch (Biedermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, viii., 307) about the concealed seam, for this seam is anything but concealed.

77. "The wonderful words with which the Emperor received me" (*Br.*, xx,, 230, and Riemer, *Briefe*, p. 325).

78. This was true up to the time of the revolution. "The inhabitants still preserved their thoroughly German character, still clung to their inherited customs and institutions" (Lorenz-Scherer, *Gesch. d. Els.*, 169).

79. Merian greeted Nicolai, at the time of the latter's admission to the Academy, with the words: "Personne n'ignore combien l'Allemagne vous doit, et combien vous avez contribué à en perfectionner la langue et la littérature dans le siècle où nous sommes." (Harnack, *Gesch. d. Kgl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, i., 2, 534, note 1). On the 31st of July, 1806, Goethe was elected a foreign member, in 1812 a foreign regular member. On the 24th of January, 1799, Nicolai was admitted to the Academy as an extraordinary member, Kotzebue on the 27th of January, 1803, shortly after his departure from Weimar. Kotzebue was made an honorary (!) member in 1812, Nicolai an ordinary member on the 25th of October, 1804. Biester also became a member of the Academy on the 9th of April, 1798.

80. Schiller was of the same opinion (cf. *Ber. d. FDH.*, xvii., 2, 40*f.*). In 1810, in his *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, Goethe gave the Germans first rank in talent for art and science (cf. *Kürschner*, xxxvi.,[1] 97).

81. Goethe considered it his patriotic duty to keep alive the "sacred fire of German art" etc. *Cf.* Cohen, *Autographen-Katalog*, No. 139 (Fernow to Böttiger, in Böttiger, *Literarische Zustände und Zeitgenossen*, ii., 279); and Goethe to Knebel, November 24, 1813.

82. Goethe was with Arndt at Körner's house on the 21st of April, 1813. Theodor Körner had marched away to the war on the 13th of April, and was in Leipsic on the 21st (*cf.* Peschel-Wildenow, *Theodor Körner und die Seinen*, ii., 43 *ff.* and 237.)

83. In *Des Epimenides Erwachen* Epimenides is Goethe himself; not in the sense, as Loeper says in opposition to this view, that he slept away in inactivity the period from 1806 to 1813, but in the sense that, through his faith in Napoleon, through his absorption in literature and science, and through his own favourable situation he "overslept the night of misery" (l. 854). He had put himself in a state of narcosis.—Treitschke also sees Goethe in Epimenides.—The picture of Napoleon retains his magnificent strength, which, however, is no longer ascribed to him as an emanation of divine might, but as one of diabolical power, which has subjected even love and faith to its will.

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